

Of Evershot



Illustration 1: John Martins "logo" carved on both sides of tombstone. Originally there was a Maltese cross over the middle leg.

John Martin was a land surveyor and valuer in Evershot, a small village in Dorset. Much about the man is unknown; we know he was born 237 years ago in Bruton, Somerset but we have no photograph, no portrait of him or physical description. We do not know whether the house he was born in still exists, where he was educated, what his father did, when he moved from Bruton and so on. In saying this however we have said nothing that could not be said about many other people born at this time; unless you happened to be the first born son of a Peer it was highly unlikely that anything, apart from your arrival and departure from this world, would have been recorded about you. That we know anything about him can be put down to three things. Firstly and most importantly of all he left a series of diaries in which he wrote much about his work and life. Secondly we must give credit to organisations such as Ancestry which have performed the extraordinary feat of scanning and publishing the records which the state was beginning to accumulate on its citizens and finally we have evidence from his occasional appearances in the newspapers. All of these sources have been used to compose a profile which, if not exactly a picture is at least a reasonable dot to dot image.

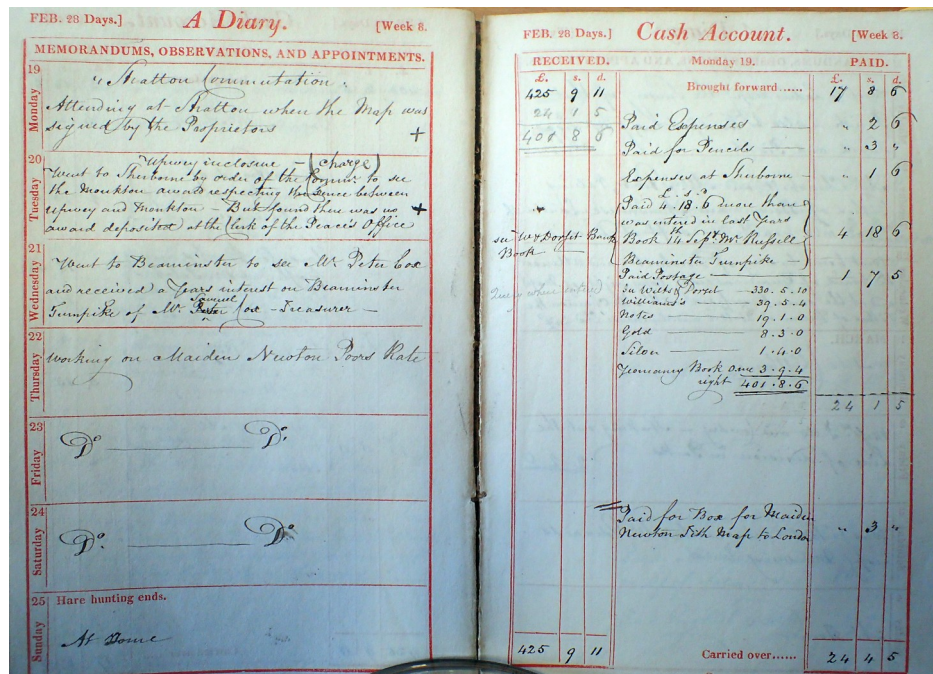
This paper has been written in three parts. The first [this one] has been written as a narrative history trying to draw together a number of themes that appear in his diary. It has a loose chronology as suits the narrative. The second part deals with his work as a surveyor and

farmer and the final part shows some of the entries that have been photographed and which do not fit into any category.

The Diaries.

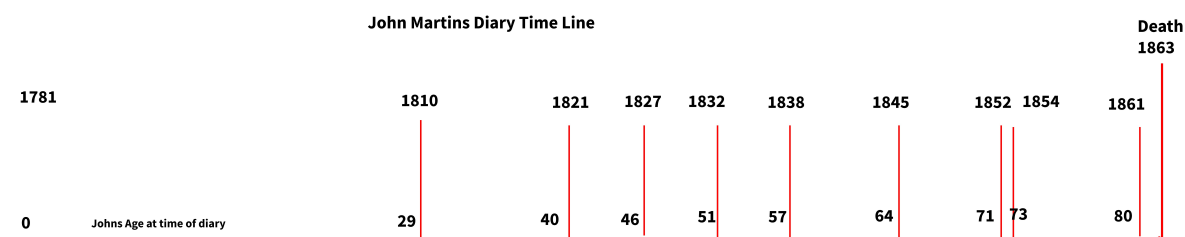
The diaries are very small, 15.5 cms tall and 10.5 cms wide, bound in a leather cover. As a consequence the entries could never be much more than a line or two and the hand writing is frequently tiny. The entries that I have photographed for the diaries give a false impression in this respect.

The series begins in 1810 with the “Daily Journal: or Gentleman’s, Merchant’s and Tradesmen’s Complete Annual Accompt-Book” and continues with a variety of makers, Kearsley’s [1821], Marshall’s [1827, 1832, 1838]; he returned to the Daily Journal in 1845, Marshall’s in 1852 and Penny’s “Improved Commercial Pocket Book” in 1854 and 1861. The format in general however is similar in all of them. The left hand page is given over to a weekly journal and the right hand page to an accounts page. There is one typographical error in the 1832 diary which Martin noted and corrected. The last week in September is printed as October and he struck it through and entered the correct month.



There are nine diaries in total but the style with which he writes is such that if an entry is read aloud at random it would be virtually impossible to identify from which year it came. This has a deceptive effect as it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking the diaries are consecutive years, which of course they are not. Of his early life, his schooling and apprenticeship as a surveyor we know nothing. The first diary starts when he is aged 29 and what we might call a young professional. There is then the biggest gap in the diaries, 11 years, before we pick up the story again in 1821 when he is 40. By this time his career was established and the diaries become more evenly spaced at between 5-7 years between them. The closest gap is between 1852 and 1854 by which time his business activities had changed and the pace of his life slowed marginally. The

impression is that by this time he is being consulted because of his long acquaintance with the area and the parishes involved; hardly surprising as he was growing older and the great days[for surveyors at least] of tithe commutation were past and inclosure awards were also on the wane.



Were there other diaries? Yes. The evidence for this comes from the accounts section in some of the diaries income has clearly been brought forward from a previous year whilst at the end of some e.g. the 1832 diary he specifically mentions that he has carried his income forward to the “*next book*”. How many there were besides the ones we have is of course not known but there are no days in any of the diaries where he has not made an entry and it is likely that the habit of keeping a diary was inculcated at an early age. We cannot know why he kept the diaries but its easy to appreciate that they acted as an aide mémoire although the brevity of most entries suggest he had an excellent memory that only occasionally needed jogging.

With over 3285 diary entries to choose from it was difficult to know what to include and what not. 468 entries were easily excluded: with a few rare entries in the 1827 diary, every Sunday was spent “*At Home*”. In the diaries from the 1820’s we find him away from home on Sundays, on one occasion when he was travelling to Bridport and in the others he stayed where he was working but undertook no active work. In only two entries, in December 1827, do we actually find him working on Sunday and even then he is at home: I think it fair to assume that he kept the Sabbath strictly. There are no days when an entry was not made but many week day entries consist of little more than “*At home on various matters*” a nice distinction between these days and Sunday.

The choice of the entries to include has not been easy but I have tried to include entries that give some insight into his life and that of the rural community in which he lived. The accounts section of the diaries has been particularly fruitful as a source of information in this respect and I have drawn on them extensively. The entries have been grouped according to the theme that connect them and I have tried to present these in chronological order although this has not always been possible. In general I have reproduced the entry in its entirety, together with the date, so that it can be found easily by anyone else who reads the diaries.

Sometimes his writing is not easy to read and where this is the case I have indicated it by [?]. All direct quotations “*are in italics*” and the spelling is his not mine. Capitalisation of words is irregular and “*Working the Theodolite and attending to Gardening*” is not untypical. Likewise punctuation marks are usually omitted. All financial transactions are given in, pounds, shillings and pence thus £0 0s 0d. I have not attempted conversion to decimal currency, older readers will remember the old currency and younger ones can use a converter on Google.

Comparing monetary values, then and now, is a difficult one ¹. When it comes to assessing the weekly wage of, for example, agricultural workers a number of problems arise. First there was considerable regional variation, secondly some workers lived in property that was owned by the farmer and their wages were somewhat lower to reflect this. In summer some labourers wages were supplemented by being given food and drink by their employers and worked longer hours. Their wives and children also brought in additional income at this time. For the most part of the year [9-10 months] however the labourer earned “winter wages” and in the South West as a whole the commonest winter wage in 1832 was 9s per week² which without these supplements was £24 a year.

In the diaries a number of salaries are mentioned. The first is for Martin himself who in ...earned £50 per year working for William Jennings [Jnr] but this was “part time” as he was working for himself at the same time. Then come Mr Edwards who was an assistant surveyor working for Martin in 1838 and who earned £100 pa and Susan Frampton, his housekeeper, in 1841 who earned £10 a year. Over the years the quality of servant seemed to decline and a junior servant who in 1861 earned £4 pa. These latter two would have also got board and lodgings although how valuable the “board” would have been in a village where Frampton at least had numerous relatives is another matter.

Historical Background

When the French revolution broke out Martin was 8 years old, in the year of Trafalgar he was 24 and in the year of Waterloo, 34. For the formative years of his life then, Britain had been at war with the French, and this was doubtless why he joined the Dorsetshire Yeomanry. The late 18th century was an unhappy time in the country; wages for agricultural labourers were low, poverty widespread and for the middling classes Poor Rates were rocketing. In the 19th century things were not much better, after agricultural prices plummeted in 1813 the government was forced to introduce the Corn Law act in 1815 but rural unrest led, as late as 1830, to the Dorset countryside being disturbed in the “Captain Swing riots. John Martin was not however one of the poor, from the outset he belonged to the lowest level of English aristocracy holding the rank of Gent[leman]. In time he would achieve the next rank up and from 1838 he was referred to as John Martin Esq[uire].

Dorset was, and was to remain a deeply rural society focused on agriculture; heavy industry, with the exception of quarrying in some areas was virtually unknown. The 1851 census was a landmark; for the first time it showed a slight majority of people living in the towns and cities rather than the countryside.³ In Dorset though the vast majority, nearly 70% of people lived in the country almost all of them engaged in farming or occupations linked to it. All was not well though. Nationally the population had grown by an average of 15% each decade from 1801 to 1861, in Dorset it was only 11% until 1840 then it dropped down to a bare 2% in 1861. Reading the 1861 census, time and again the reason is given – emigration⁴ and Martin records two

1 See <https://www.measuringworth.com/>

2 Regional agricultural wage variations in early nineteenth-century England Margaret Lyle BAHR 55_105Lyle.pdf

3 10,556,288 in towns vs 10,403,189 in the country. Census data provided by Histpop.org

4 One has to be careful here since the population in Dorset did fluctuate at this time due to the presence and then disappearance of workers associated with the railway industry.

instances of this, the first from October 1852 says, "*Valuing the Farm-- Edwin was gon [sic] to see the Dibbles depart for Australia*"; and "*Gave Eliza Perratt *** Clark going to Australia-£5*" and finally "*Gave Old Woman*" 2s.

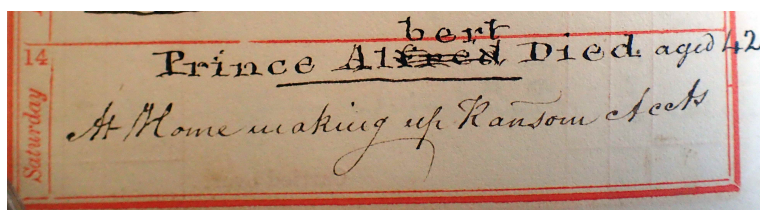
Any idea that country life was idyllic was dispelled by William Cobbett in his various publications and in 1843 the Reverend Sydney Godolphin Osborne wrote of conditions in Stourpain, Dorset, "*Within this last year I saw in a room about 13 feet square, three beds: on the first lay the mother, a widow, dying of consumption; on the second two unmarried daughters, one 18 years of age, the other 12; on the third a young married couple, whom I had married two days before....It was in these cottages that a malignant typhus fever broke out about two years ago which afterwards spread through the village*" A Commissioner into the "*Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*" found, again in Stourpain, "*a cottage in which eleven persons slept in three beds without curtains in a room ten feet square; the father and mother with two infants, in one bed; two twin daughters of 20 and a third of 7 years old in another; and four sons, aged 17,15,14 and 10 in the third.*" Behind the cottages "*there are shallow excavations, the receptacles, apparently of all the dirt of the families. The matter constantly escaping from the pigsties privies etc is allowed to find its way through the passages between the cottages...It was in these cottages that a malignant typhus fever broke out about two years ago, which afterwards spread through the village.*"

This was not untypical and life, even in Martins world, was hard. Evershot may have been a healthier environment than Stourpain so close to the River Stour and its tendency to flood but even here mortality was high, particularly amongst children, as we will see. Life was hard in other ways as well and Martin himself may have contributed to some of that hardship; at the end of February 1827 he had an abortive visit to Frampton to see a magistrate and get "*a summons for the Gundry's at Ransom for cutting down a young ash tree but Mr Brown was from home*". Not giving up he, "*Went to Dorchester and got William and Francis Gundry into gaol for cutting a young tree*" on the 3rd March and this time he was successful. They were in prison 2 weeks before being released without charge. The harshness of the punishment may seem obvious but how much worse it must have been when you consider the effects on their families, deprived of the only people to put bread on their plates. At other times we find him issuing notices to quit and turning people out of their cottages. Although he was not responsible directly he also records one Evershot family being removed to the Union, this being the workhouse at Beaminster to which Evershot was attached.

Of the broad sweep of history he mentions nothing; some of the great events such as Trafalgar and Waterloo took place in years not covered by the diaries yet the "Great Reform Act" of 1832 is not mentioned even though a diary exists for that year. The diaries are not totally devoid of historical entries. He lived through the reins of four monarchs, Georges III and IV [19th July 1821 "*King Geo the 4th crowned*"], William IV and Victoria. He recorded that the "*Duke of York died*" [1827], celebrated in 1838 with "*Queen Victoria Coronation Day*" to which he gave a "*subscription to coronation fireworks*".

The longest entries in relation to a historical event occur in September 1852; after mentioning that he was at Ransom [Rampisham], working on "*Particulars*" he records: "*The Duke of Wellington died at Walmer Castle in his 84th year*". A couple of months later, [the Duke must

have been pretty well embalmed], he records the lying in state and the consequences: “1-day of the Duke of Wellington lying in State at Chelsea Hospital, the Crowd was so great that many were Killed”. [13th November 1852]. In March 1861 we get “The Duchess of Kent died age 75” and in December the death of Prince Albert in 1861 even if he did get the name wrong!



Similarly of the great 19th century statesmen, Peel, Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Disraeli and Gladstone – we hear nothing, except a short entry “Resignation of Lord John Russell’s Ministry”⁵ from February 20th 1852. It is true that we do not have all the diaries but there is no political comment at all in the ones we do have. Martin lived long enough to see peace with France follow the Napoleonic wars and in April 1854 [73] he records, “At Home- A day of Thanksgiving and prayer for the success of Armies and Fleets in the War with Russia” the occasion being the war with Russia in the Crimea when for once France and England were allies. Later in the year he gave £3 to the [Royal] “Patriotic Fund” set up to support the war by Queen Victoria and in October he gave “Ringers for the victory at Sevastopol 2s 6d”.

It should not be imagined though that the diaries are devoid of interest. They contain much which reflects the rapidly changing times of the early 19th century as we will see.

Personae Dramatis

In any persons life there are stories of others that need to be described but the problem for the amateur genealogist is knowing when to stop. I have limited my descriptions to those whose lives impinged directly on Martins and which enhance his story.. The first of these was naturally enough his parents James and Elizabeth Martin.

In 1776, Johns parents, James Martin and Elizabeth Jennings were married in Bruton, Somerset. Both were about 20 years old but apart from their marriage licence there are no other records about them. It is generally accepted that John Martin was born, together with a twin sister Martha, in 1781. The main evidence for this comes from the age and birth place that is given in the 1841 census although I have not been able to find a baptismal record to prove this.⁶ There were numerous ‘Martin’s’ and ‘Jennings’ in the town and surrounding areas and whilst there is evidence of some links between them [see below] it has not been possible to construct any coherent family tree linking all of them.

Of Martins immediate family, or his life in Bruton we know almost nothing. James, his father died in 1820 [39]⁷ still living in Bruton; he was 63. Of course this was a year for which no diary is extant, but even though we have a diary from 1810 he is not mentioned in it and nor is his mother whose date of death is not known. Neither parent is mentioned in the diaries except in one lonely entry which, not unsurprisingly given the circumstances, is rather tetchy. In June

5 In December 1851 Palmerston was dismissed by Russell for recognising Napoleon 111 coup in France. In February Palmerston tabled a no confidence motion in the government which Russell lost.

6 Several people on Ancestry have constructed [at least in part] his family tree and all seem to agree on these details.

7 Dates in brackets indicate the age of the person concerned [usually John] at the time the event occurred.

1832 he “Pd Mr J Jennings for Letters of Administration to my Mothers Effects but it should have been to my Fathers Effects it was done wrong & I am this money out of my own Pocket - £10 10s 0d”. This entry is 12 years after his fathers death which seems a long time to gain control of his effects. It also suggests his mother died within this period and that they had held their property separately. Since women's property ⁸automatically became the property of her husband after marriage this may seem rather strange but could be explained by them having a formal marriage settlement preserving her property.

What James did for a living is not known, the earliest Pigots directory dates from 1822, after his fathers death, and does not list any tradesmen in Bruton by the name of Martin. There is a land surveyor by the name of Bennett.

In 1786 [5] his mother had another set of twins; a brother, Robert and another sister Elizabeth, who were baptised on the 28th of August of that year. In his diaries John refers to another brother, George, whose birth cannot be traced, but surviving records indicate it to be around 1801. He visited John on 31st January 1821 and again on May 10th 1852 and his subsequent death in Oxford, was recorded by Martin in his laconic style on 3rd November 1852 [71]: “Putting the Office to rights and other matters in the Office. My Brother George died at Oxford”. The censuses of 1841 and 1851 record that George was a college servant and the Oxford University Alumni has an entry that he was “servant to St Johns College: privilegiatus 17 Sept 1832”.

In total then, Elizabeth Martin [snr] had two sets of twins, and one singleton baby all of whom survived, no mean achievement at this time. It is possible that others were born but if so we have no record. We may wonder what happened to them all?

By 1803 Martha, John’s twin, was living in Westbury Wilts and was married to Maurice Perry on 1st August. Interestingly the register was signed by Maurice but Martha simply left her mark suggesting she was illiterate. The 1841 census shows Martha living as an inn keeper in Stalbridge with her daughter Mary. Maurice had died the year before. The 1839 Tithe apportionment lists him as being the occupier of the Swan Inn in Stalbridge. Martha was to survive until 10th June 1861 when she died at Yarlinton. She may have been in some financial difficulties before she died as in February 1861 he “Gave my Sister Martha Perry £5” but how he gave this to her is a mystery since there is no record of him visiting her or vice versa.

Robert stayed in Bruton, married one Amy Tucker in 1812, had four children and died in 1841 aged 55. Nothing more about him or his family is known. He is not mentioned in the diaries.

On 4th January 1845 [64] Martin records “Duke of Cleveland Working on the Railroad plans &c My Sister Mrs Perratt died” and on the 11th “Attending the Funeral of my Sister Mrs Perratt”. In the same month he “Pd Mrs Jesty what she paid for Coffin &c for Mrs Perratt £3 11s 5d” which suggests she died in a degree of penury without family other than John.

If we accept that he only had two sisters, Martha and Elizabeth then Mrs Perratt must logically be Elizabeth. Unfortunately there is no record of an Elizabeth Martin in either Somerset or Dorset marrying anyone called Perratt and no record of anyone of that name dying. There is an Elizabeth Martin who married in Bruton in 1824 but her spouse was one John Earle from Ditchat in Somerset. We don’t know when he died but in the 1841 census Elizabeth is listed as a Publican

8 Personal property became that of the husband but not “real” property ie any land they owned.

[? of the Manor House Inn] and has two sons James and Frederick. Could this be his sister Elizabeth ? That Elizabeth Earle is connected to Martin is strongly suggestive. Elizabeth lived in Ditchat where John Martin was to be the sole Inclosure commissioner in 1844. On the 4th January 1861 he noted in his diary “[*Frederick Earl came here*]” and on Saturday 5th “[*Frederick Earl left*]”. In the accounts section we see him giving £1 to Frederick and a reference to him being given other gifts which we will discuss later. Why would he have done this if there was no family bond between them. Was Elizabeth Earl, Johns sister? If so then who was Mrs Perratt? Was there another sister we don’t know about? This is not without the bounds of possibility; without the entries in the diaries we would not have known about Georges’ existence and without the reference to Oxford we would not have been able to link George to John. Even his twin sister Martha only gets two mentions and that in the 1861 diary. Who knows what other siblings unknown to us lurk in the missing diaries? Elizabeth Earle died in 1845 albeit she is listed in the second, not the first quarter of the year and the matter is complicated further in that there was a Perratt family living in Evershot during this period, but even when Somerset is included I cannot find anyone named Elizabeth. Even more oddly in March 1854 he “*Gave Mrs Perratt in Distress }£5 Miss[es] Jennings gave £5 Mrs Jesty ditto £5*” and in December 1854 John “*Gave Eliza Perratt *** Clark going to Australia-£5*”. None of these people can be traced either but the sums involved are not inconsiderable, suggesting again a family link between them. The whole thing is a mystery that I have been unable to resolve.

Another conundrum comes with an entry he made in May 1861 [80]. On the 24th he made an entry “*Mrs Martin died at Weymouth aged 86*
At home -Marked my sheep
(Willham cottage now my own)”

According to records on Ancestry there is only one person with the Martin name who died in Weymouth in May of that year and she was called Ann. Unfortunately no age is recorded.

In the 1841 census for Shepton Montague there is another John Martin, also a land surveyor who was aged 50. There may well have been some confusion between them locally as they both seem careful to distinguish themselves in various notices they posted in the press. Thus they refer to themselves as “John Martin of Shepton Montague” or “John Martin of Evershot.” This John Martin was to die in 1842 but he was survived by his wife – one Ann Martin who, at the time, lived in Wellham⁹ [a part of Shepton Montague]. This is almost certainly the same Mrs Martin who died in Weymouth, no other Ann Martins are listed in Ancestry during these years and she was 86. If this is the case it follows then that John Martin of Shepton Montague was somehow related to John Martin of Evershot. The coincidences are remarkable: the names are the same, the occupations are the same, and John Martin of Evershot had a son who was [in 1851] to live in Wellham. That John Martin of Evershot inherited the cottage in Wellham may be explained by the fact that Frederick¹⁰, the son of John Martin of Shepton Montague, died in 1844 and could not inherit the cottage from his mother.

John’s birth town of Bruton was a prosperous place, in 1801 it had a population of 1,632 with a slight surplus of women over men, [932 to 700], possibly due to its importance as a

9 I disregard the difference in spelling which is common enough when considering names in the past.

10 Another Frederick; they were not very inventive with their names.

manufacturing centre for silk hosiery. It seems however that this kind of industry was less important to the family than the traditional one of managing the land. Over the centuries the Manor of Bruton had, through a series of convoluted set of acquisitions, lands in Redlynch, Shepton Montague and Wraxall. The first two places are within a few miles of Bruton and Wraxall is within a few miles of Evershot and all were to figure in Martins life and brought him into contact with possibly the most important person in his professional life, the owner of the Manor of Bruton- the Earl of Ilchester.

The Victoria History of Somerset describes the history of the manor in the 17th and 18th centuries: *“In 1672 Sir Stephen Fox bought the manor with Bickwick and half Stoke Holloway manor, in repayment of a debt. Sir Stephen died in 1716 and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, also Stephen, who took the additional name Strangways on his marriage in 1735. He was created Lord Ilchester and Baron Strangways in 1741, Lord Ilchester and Stavordale and Baron of Redlynch in 1747, and earl of Ilchester in 1756.”*

It is worth noting that Stephen had a younger brother, Henry Fox, who was to be created Lord Holland in 1763 producing another line to the family. The Strangways family was to be the most important influence in the fortunes of the Martin family. The first Earl could not have been known to Martin, he died in 1776, but the second Earl, who died in 1802 [21]¹¹ would almost certainly have been. Since the diaries only begin in 1810 we may suspect he worked for him but we have no definite proof. For the greater part of Johns career it was the third Earl, Henry Stephen¹², who was to be the most important. Until 1802 he was styled Lord Stavordale but after inheriting from his father he took the title Earl of Ilchester. He died aged 70 in 1858 [67] and is one of the few characters in this story for whom we have a portrait.



Illustration 2: Henry Stephen Fox- Strangways, 3rd Earl of Ilchester by John Linnell 1848

The family seat of the Ilchester's' was originally at Redlynch House in what is today Redlynch Park a mile or so SE from Bruton. The second Earl made his principal residence at Melbury, Dorset, and in the 1790's proposed returning the park at Redlynch to agricultural use. The third Earl set about bringing this to fruition and by the 1830's the mansion house had been partly abandoned and a part given over to a farmhouse.

The Earl of Ilchester was a direct source of employment for John, and possibly his father as well, it may have been the move from Redlynch to Melbury that prompted John's own move

11 Figures in brackets [39] etc indicate John Martins age when the event occurred.

12 Hereafter abbreviated to HSFS

to Evershot. John's contacts with the Ilchester family were not confined to the Earl alone but also with the 3rd Baron Holland, grandson to the first Lord Ilchester, Charles Redlynch Fox-Strangways, Rector of Maiden Newton until his death in 1836, Edward Fox-Strangways, Rector of Melbury Osmond until his death in 1838, William Thomas Horner Fox-Strangways the Fourth Earl of Ilchester and finally Henry Fox-Strangways who was the Rector of Silverton in Devon. The diaries record that he either worked for these people or in their parishes. As well as a primary source of work the Strangways family almost certainly provided John with an extensive network of contacts amongst the local landowners and nobility. HSFS was, for example, commissioned captain in the Dorsetshire Yeomanry in 1808 and John may have thought it politic to join as well and in the diaries we find many references to his yeomanry work.

When he moved to Evershot, is not known but in March 1816 [35] he is about to be married and his wife to be is a member of another family whose influence on Martin was to be considerable. His wife to be, Mary Jennings, was born in 1784 to William Jennings [Snr] and his wife Ann Jennings [Snr]. Mary had two brothers: John the eldest [born in 1774] was destined to be a Solicitor and father of a son Joseph Crew Jennings who will figure in our story. Mary also had an older sister Ann [Jnr] born in 1780 and arguably the most important member of the family so far as John was concerned, William Jennings [Jnr] [born in 1775]. On the 22nd April 1816 John married Mary Jennings in Evershot church one of the witnesses being her brother John. He was 35 and she 32.

MARRIAGES solemnized in the Parish of <i>Evershot</i>		in the Year 1816	
in the County of <i>Dorset</i>			
<i>John Martin</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish		
<i>Bachelor</i>			
and <i>Mary Jennings</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish		
<i>Spinster</i>			
were married in this <i>Church</i>	by <i>Licence</i>	with Consent of	
		this <i>Twenty second</i> Day of	
<i>April</i>	in the Year One thousand eight hundred and	<i>Eighteen</i>	
	By me <i>John Clayton Rector</i>		
This Marriage was solemnized between us	<i>John Martin</i>	<i>Mary Jennings</i>	
In the Presence of	<i>C. P. Ward</i>	<i>John Jennings</i>	
No. 10.			

A week later William Jennings [Jnr] got married to Susannah Petty.

The Martin and Jennings families were clearly close but it is not until 1854 that we find just how close they were. William Jennings [Snr] had died in 1799 aged 55; his son William [Jnr] was to survive until 1854[73] when on the 20th January Martin records: "Mr William Jennings died this morning ... one o'clock" [o'clock]. Martins family were to benefit greatly from his demise for William and Susannah had only one child who had died in 1818. William [jnr]'s estate was valued at a whopping £100,000 about £9m today depending on what method of calculation is used and it is in his will that the relationship between the families is clarified. On his death he made bequests to four nephews and two nieces who included "My **nephew** Edwin Jennings Martin" and "My **nephew** Arthur Martin" both sons of John [my emphasis see below]. The interest in the estate passed to his wife Susannah and then following her demise the estate was to be divided equally

between the same four nephews and nieces. At some time he added a codicil to his will where he left: “To my **cousin** John Martin of Evershot aforesaid Gentleman the sum of one thousand pounds To my **cousin**¹³ George Martin of St Johns Street Oxford the sum of one hundred pounds...”.

Thus we have definitive proof that the families were related and the only reasonable conclusion we can draw is that John Martins mother, Elizabeth, was the sister of William Jennings [Snr] and that John Martin, John Jennings, William Jennings [jnr], Mary Jennings and Ann Jennings were first cousins. Today marrying one’s cousin tends to be frowned upon but in fact it was not uncommon during this period and being a churchman Martin would have known that cousins are not included in the “Table of Kindred and Affinity” listed in the Book of Common Prayer.

The Jennings family in Dorset had a history of working as land surveyors. William Jennings [Snr], who died in 1799 was an Inclosure commissioner, on the Knook and Ogbourne St George Inclosures [both in Wilts] inclosures together with those at Puddletown and Wyke Regis in Dorset. In 1786 he was appointed surveyor to the Evershot inclosure.

William Jennings [Jnr] followed in his professional foot steps, although his description of himself is somewhat fluid. Both he and his brother John appear in a militia list from 1798 where he describes himself as a land surveyor, in a Jury list of 1825 when he has become a Gentleman, and in the censuses of 1841 and 1851 when he has become a land agent. My belief [unsupported by evidence] is that John went to Evershot, staying in the house of William Jennings [Snr] where he worked alongside his cousin learning the skills needed of a surveyor. As young men each made their own way, but as we will see in the next paper we have evidence that John and William [Jnr] worked frequently together, particularly on inclosures, that John was employed by William and that he also worked with John Jennings who acted at varying times as clerk to the Maiden Newton Turnpike and land agent to the Earl of Ilchester.

William Jennings [Jnr] was buried on the 26th January 1854 and Martin recorded: “Mr Wm Jennings buried- Lord Ilchester attended the funeral.” After the funeral Johns dealings with the family continued as on Monday 13th February Wm Jennings stock was sold off and he “pd for Things purchased at Mr Wm Jennings Sale } £55-9s-6d Chk Dorset and Wilts” in return he “recvd [£14] of Arthur part of the above” and even Mrs Wm Jennings paid him £1-4s-0d for a quarter of Oats.

	<p>The inscription reads :</p> <p>OUR MOMENTS FLY APACE. NOR WILL OUR MINUTES STAY: JUST LIKE A FLOOD OUR HASTY DAYS ARE SWEEPING US AWAY</p> <p>WELL IF OUR DAYS MUST FLY, WE’LL KEEP THEIR END IN SIGHT WE’LL SPEND THEM ALL IN WISDOMS WAY THEN LET THEM SPEED THEIR FLIGHT.</p>
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13 My emphasis.

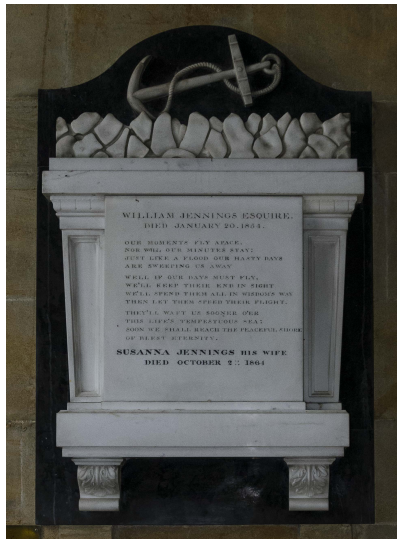
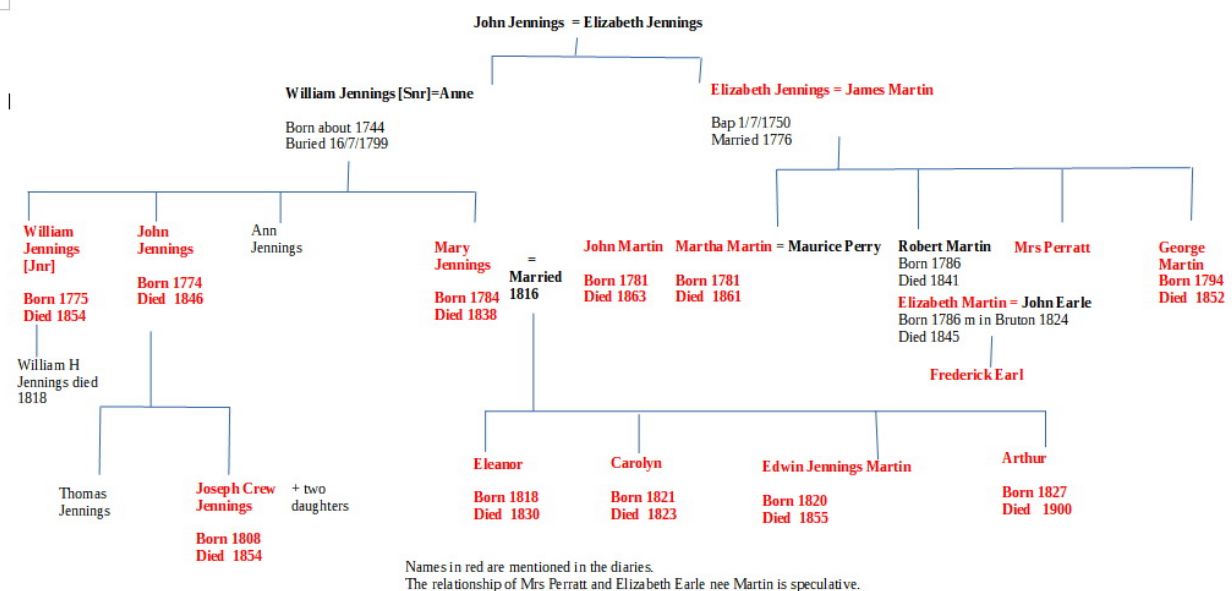


Illustration 3: William Jennings [Jnr] and Susannah Jennings's memorial in St Osmunds.

THEY'LL WAFT US SOONER O'ER
THIS LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS SEA:
SOON WE SHALL REACH THE PEACEFUL SHORE
OF BLEST ETERNITY.



John was paid his bequest on 21st July 1854 as an entry in the accounts section reveals:

1000-0-0
528-0-0
472-0-0

Pd this into W&D -Yeovil by check from Mrs Wm Jennings.

Received of the Executors of my dear Friend the late Mr William Jennings legacy left me by him Paid the s; [same]Executors for 48 Shares which I held of Mr Wm Jennings in the Wilts and Dorset Bank now £11 a share become my own property } £528

Finally before leaving our look at the Jennings family we have to mention the sad case of Joseph Crew Jennings. Joseph was a solicitor like his father, and inherited his fathers business when John Jennings died in 1846. John Martin and Joseph Crew were close friends, dining together on numerous occasions. When Joseph's father, died he left £18,000 to his widow Anne and his two daughters with the money going to the daughters on Anne's death which occurred in March 1859. This however was personal property, the true wealth of the family resided in "real" property, that is to say land. This he left to his two sons, Thomas and Joseph Crew but unfortunately Thomas "*met with an accident which brought on paralysis, and the result was that he became an imbecile and had to be placed in a private lunatic asylum, where he died.*"¹⁴ Thomas bequeathed his lands to his brother, Joseph who remained living in Evershot "*with his mother, the testatrix, who kept his house for him. She was an exceedingly affectionate mother and he was an attached son, and they lived together until his death*".

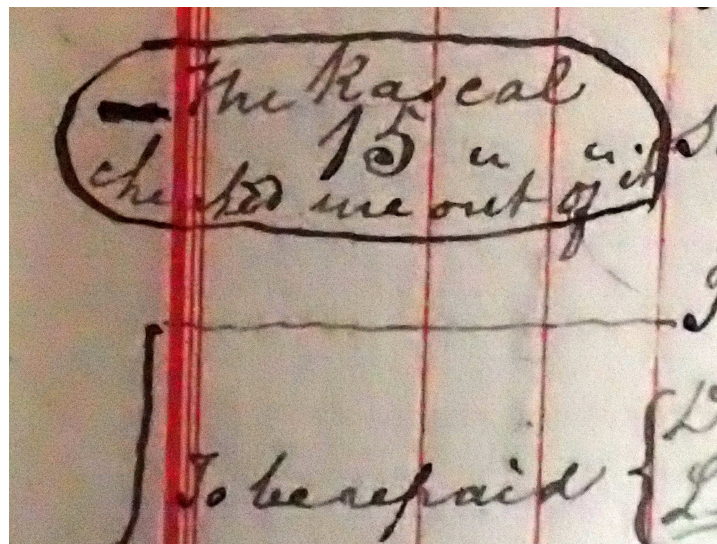
This occurred in 1854 and, not unsurprisingly, given the circumstances was reported in the newspapers, the Worcestershire Chronicle wedging the story between that of a 21 yr old woman who had killed herself after being seduced and abandoned, and a man boiled to death in London in a vat of boiling soap. Suicide being something that only the lower orders it was reported that he "*put an end to his existence...whilst suffering from temporary derangement*". The event must have caused a considerable stir in Evershot and Martin in particular must have felt an enormous shock. Martin had known him and his family from birth and they were Churchwardens together in 1854. Martins initial entry in his diary was sympathetic: 23rd March "*At Home-Poor Mr Crew Jennings Shot himself with a Pistol in the Shrubbery*". On the 28th there is "*At Home- Mr Crew Jennings was Buried at Evershot - Killed a Pig- 10:16*" [10 stone 16 pounds]. At the time the circumstances surrounding the death were not known but were to emerge gradually and doubtless caused great scandal in the area particularly as the events culminated in what must have been an embarrassing legal action in 1860.

The DCC of 27th December 1860 takes up the story: "he [Joseph Crew Jennings] *had formed a connection with a young woman called Chamberlain who lived in his mothers establishment. He removed her from Evershot and she went to live at Walworth, where she was frequently visited by Mr Jennings.*" The inevitable happened and a son, Charles Chamberlain, was born after which Mr Crew Jennings married Ms Chamberlain but did not tell his own mother lest she be upset. Joseph had successfully hidden this marriage from everyone but early in 1854 he went to London to see a solicitor [Mr Basket], who was his own London agent, and made a will leaving Charles, now 14, the interest on a charge on the estate in the amount of £10,000 to provide an income for his son. The remainder would go to his mother. Joseph also made an unusual offer to Mr Baskett to leave London, come down to Evershot and take over Josephs own solicitor's practice as he wished to retire. On 20th March Mr Baskett and his family came to Evershot, took up the practice and three days after arrival Joseph killed himself although it is not clear why. It fell to the hapless Mr Baskett to break the news to Joseph's mother about the marriage and "*she expressed a great desire to see her grandson and his mother, and she went to Southampton where they were then staying and introduced herself to them. She was pleased with the boy, became much attached to him and invited him to Evershot.*" Further acquaintance with

the boy led her to make a new will in which effectively she left him the bulk of her estate leaving him “*substantially in the same position as if he had been legitimate*”. He in turn changed his name to Jennings and embarked on a life in farming.

The new financial arrangements did not go down well with her two daughters who, when she died in 1860, challenged the will in court, alleging that Joseph's mother had been unduly influenced by Mr Baskett when making the will. The situation was complicated because William Jennings [Jnr] who had also just died had left equal shares in his estate to Joseph, Joseph's brother Thomas, the two daughters, Edwin Jennings Martin and Arthur Martin. By now of course Thomas and Joseph were dead and it appears that in making her will Anne Jennings had attempted to even out the monies from the various estates to ensure that all the residual parties [including Charles] were treated equally. In the event the court held that the will was good and Mr Baskett exonerated from any charge of wrong doing. He continued to practice in Evershot and remained the solicitor to John Martin.

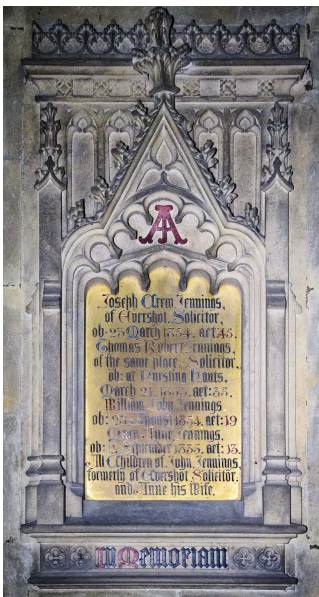
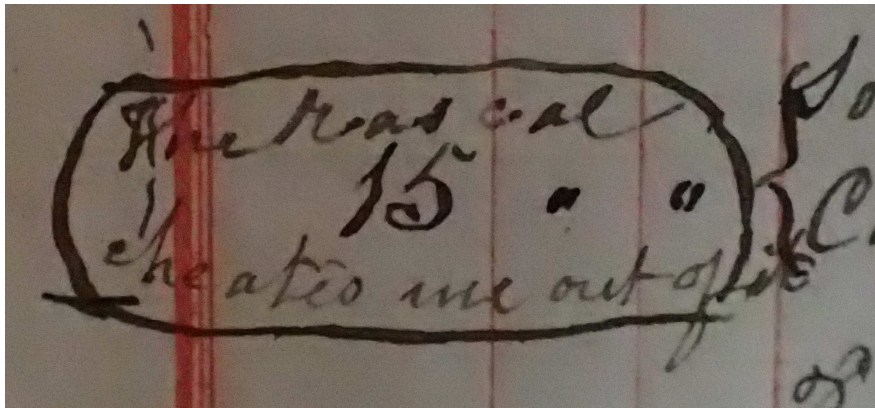
As many of the facts must have emerged after Joseph's death one can imagine John Martins astonishment and sense of betrayal and his initial sympathetic reaction changed to one of indignation particularly when he discovered he was out of pocket. A matter of days before Joseph's death Martin had paid £16 17s 6d to him for various insurances on houses that he owned, Joseph being an agent for the Salamander Fire Insurance Society. £15 of this money had not been passed on to the Insurance company. At some point he wrote in the accounts section “*The Rascal cheated me out of 15 [£]*” and separately “*To be repaid*”



The Rascal
cheated me out of 15

To be repaid

In the event he was to get his money back from the estate as an entry a couple of weeks later in the accounts section shows. He was not however in a forgiving mood recording it as “15.0.0 The Rascal cheated me out of”



As Joseph had not committed suicide per se but had been “temporarily deranged” he was buried in the family vault at St Osmunds Evershot. The inscription reads:
*“Joseph Crew Jennings of Evershot Solicitor ob. 23 March 1854 aet 45
 Thomas Robert Jennings of the same place Solicitor,
 ob. At Hursling Hants March 21 1853 aet 35
 William John Jennings ob 23 August 1854 aet:19 Mary Anne
 Jennings ob: 2 September 1835. aet 13
 All Children of John Jennings formerly of Evershot Solicitor*

I have dwelt at some length on the Jennings family as they were so influential in the life of the Martin family. Throughout the diary though there are numerous people who appear and disappear and where possible I have included short biographies in the diary section.

Evershot and Ransom

When John Martin arrived in Evershot is not known. The first record we have of him in Dorset is in 1807 when he is promoted to an Ensign in the Dorset Yeomanry¹⁵ A document in the Dorset History centre dated 1807 [26] records:

*“Commissions in the 1st Batt. Dorset Vol. Infantry signed by the Lord Lieutenant James Eaton Gent to be Lieutenant vice R Deane resigned dated 26th May 1807
 John Martin Gent to be Ensign vice Jams Eaton promoted dated 26th May 1807”*

Until this time we have no other records of his life and we have to wait three years until the 1810 diary [29] before learning much about him by this time he is definitely living in Evershot although whereabouts in the village he does not say. This diary is given over totally to his work and there

15 I use this term as shorthand for all the various incarnations of the early Dorsetshire Yeomanry. See later.

are no entries relating to his family or the people around him. Having moved to Evershot he never moved away, living and dying in the village.

Today Evershot is a small village, off the beaten track, with an estimated population [2013] of some 210. In 1821, a census year, it was much bigger, we know this from an entry he made in his diary on the 30th June that year:

Friday 29	Order Reclasure Meeting - Eam. Accounts &c	Population in 1801/497	<p>“Went to Dorchester with population form for Evershot</p> <p>Population in 1801/497</p> <p>Males 289 Females 278</p> <p>Militia men 5</p> <p>Total 573.</p> <p>Population in 1811 498</p> <p>Increase—75”</p>												
Saturday 30	Went to Dorchester with Population form for Evershot	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Males</td> <td>Females</td> <td>Total</td> </tr> <tr> <td>289</td> <td>278</td> <td>567</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Militia men</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>573</td> </tr> </table>		Males	Females	Total	289	278	567	Militia men		5			573
Males	Females	Total													
289	278	567													
Militia men		5													
		573													
	JULY 1.	Population 1811 - 498													
	At Home	increase - 75													
Sunday		Carried over													

It is possible that he was even involved in organising the census collection as there is a signed entry for 1821 [40] in the vestry minutes indicating he was an Overseer of the Poor at this time. Evershot was a prosperous village, and, in contrast to many bigger villages it appears in early version of Pigots or Kelly’s directory. This entry from the 1830 Kelly’s lists eleven “Nobility, Gentry and Clergy”, three professionals including a teacher, an attorney and a surgeon and sundry others including a land agent, land surveyor and veterinary surgeon.

EVERSHOT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

EVERSHOT is a small village and parish, in the hundred of Tollerford, situated midway between Beaminster and Cerne Abbas; distant from London 129 miles by way of Sherborne. The village is a neat and clean little place, without possessing any thing worthy of especial notice. The river Frome rises in this parish, and a tributary stream to the Iwer has its source on the north side of the hill here. The church, an ancient structure, was originally a chapel of ease to Frome St. Quintin, but the living is now independent of that parish. The principal seat in the neighbourhood is “Melbury house,” the seat of the Earl of Ilchester. Formerly a market was held here on Saturday, but it has been discontinued some years; a fair is held on the 12th of May, for cattle, pigs and cloth. The parish contained, in 1821, 567 inhabitants.

POST OFFICE, Alexander Wellman, *Post Master*.—Letters from all parts arrive from DORCHESTER every day at twelve, and are despatched every afternoon at two.

NOBILITY, GENTRY AND CLERGY.

Bellamy Rev. Thomas, Chetnole
 Bower Rev. —, Melbury Osmond
 Coxwell Rev. Charles, Evershot
 Ilchester the Right Hon. the Earl of, Melbury house
 Jenkins Miss, Chetnole
 Matthews Rev. John, Chetnole
 Perkins Mrs. Chetnole
 Petty Henry, gent. Evershot
 Petty John, esq. Frome St. Quintin
 Scott Capt. R.N. Chalmington house
 Woolcott Philip, esq. Chetnole

PROFESSIONAL PERSONS.

Coxwell Rev. Chs. academy, Evershot
 Jennings John, attorney, Evershot
 St. Quintin Ed. H. surgeon, Evershot

PUBLIC HOUSES.

Acorn (& excise office) John Chubb
 Fox, Robert Way
SHOPKEEPERS & TRADERS.
 Bow Richard, plumber, &c.
 Cave Thos. & Son, linen manufrs. & maltsters, Melbury Osmond
 Chubb Edward, cooper
 Chubb James, baker
 Chubb John, auctioneer & maltster
 Chubb John, jun. cooper
 Cox James, tailor
 Cox Thomas, tailor
 Cox William, tailor
 Deem Thomas, linen draper
 Devenesh Jas. shopkeeper, Cattistock
 Gilbert Wm. boot & shoemaker, &c.
 Guppy Robert, shopkeeper
 Jennings William, land agent

Jessop Joseph, boot & shoe maker
 Knell James, boot & shoe maker
 Lilly Sarah, tobacco manf. Chetnole
 Martin John, land surveyor
 Mullens George, baker
 Nobbs John, shopkeeper, Cattistock
 Nobbs T. veter. surgeon, Cattistock
 Norman Henry, tanner [Osmond
 Palmer Richd. linen draper, Melbury
 Pouncy John, saddler, &c.
 Short Joseph, shopkeeper
 Swaffield Benjamin, timber merchant, East Chelborough
 Trenchard, William, butcher
 Way Robert, butcher

CARRIERS.

To SHERBORNE, John Cox, daily.
 To YEOVIL, Thos. How, every Friday.

Many of these people figure in the diaries, albeit usually in a form similar to this one from October 1854 payable to the local butcher: “£46-15-0 Rcd from Mr Trenchard for two heifers and seven sheep” followed immediately by “Pd for meat £3-10s7 1/2 d”. Food miles in those days were not a problem.

Evershot was host to an annual fair and some [Law] court proceedings took place there as well. The fair was traditionally held on May 1st and the diaries illustrate a historical curiosity. In 1752 England adopted the Gregorian calendar and this had the effect of adding days to the old Julian Calendar. The number of days added varies with time. In 1861 [80] Martin attended Evershot Fair on the 13th May and the diary has printed on it the term “*Old May Day*” the reason being that between 1800 and 1900 there was a 12 day difference between the calendars. May 13th in the Gregorian calendar was May 1st in the Julian. It is interesting that one hundred years after the change some people still used or remembered the old calendar. Country fairs were important events in the social calendar, Hardy’s description of the Casterbridge fair tells a story of decline: “*Here, too it was evident that the years had told. Certain mechanical improvements might have been noticed in the roundabouts and high-fliers, machines for testing rustic strength and weight, and in the erections devoted to shooting for nuts. But the real business of the fair had considerably dwindled. The new periodical great markets of neighbouring towns were beginning to interfere seriously with the trade carried on here for centuries. The pens for sheep, the tie-ropes for horses, were about half as long as they had been. The stalls of tailors, hosiers, coopers, linen-draper, and other such trades had almost disappeared, and the vehicles were far less numerous.*” But this was written in the late 19th century, some 76 years after the diaries begin, and in Martins day it was still a big event. Oddly Martin never sold any of his live stock at Evershot fair but there are several entries where he sold [or occasionally failed to sell] at other fairs in the area.

The neighbouring parish of Rampisham, which he refers to as Ransom and which is pronounced Ransom, also played a large part in his life. He owned a small amount of land there but its main importance was the fact that until the 1850’s it was owned by the Earl of Ilchester. Both Evershot and Rampisham were relatively unusual in still having Manorial courts. In many areas these had disappeared with the decline of the manor. Martin records attending the Manor Court at Rampisham. In 1858 the DCC¹⁶ announced “*The Annual Court Leet for the manor of Frome St Quinton and Evershot was held a few days ago at the Acorn Inn, Evershot before A Martin Esq steward.*”

There appears in addition to have been a properly constituted “law” court, at Evershot as well, at which cases were tried. Martin sat on the Jury in 1827 and at first I wondered if this was the manor court but if so why would they need a jury? In the Dorset County Chronicle from 1829 is a report concerning an action by one Mary Serjeant “*a maiden lady of opulence*” against one John Marsh “*who lives in the same parish and walks in a humble station of life*” for “*nuisances*” committed by him in his garden adjacent to Mrs Serjeants. She wanted £500 damages from him. The case was tried by the Deputy Sheriff of Dorset in front of a Jury and he appears to have been unimpressed by the nuisances committed as he awarded damages at “*one farthing, the smallest coin of the realm.*” It appears then that this was the court at which John was to sit on several occasions as well as attending the Manor Courts.

Evershot was a thriving village but it was no different to many villages and it may be wondered why it merited an entry in Kelly’s when so many others did not? The answer of course was the presence of the Earl of Ilchester whose family seat was in Melbury Sampford an adjoining Parish. A convenient lane [private] leads out of the village to Melbury House only a

short ride away. Even today large landed estates have a powerful influence on the local economy and in John Martin's day it was more powerful still. In one of those pieces of railway folk lore we learn from the Dorset County Chronicle: "*Alarming Illness of the Earl of Ilchester – On Monday evening [28th December 1857] the Right Hon the Earl of Ilchester was taken seriously ill at his seat Melbury House, near Evershot, and continued very ill throughout the greater part of Tuesday, until evening, when he exhibited some slight symptoms of amendment. The early express train from Dorchester on Wednesday morning, was specially stopped at Evershot, in order to enable Dr Cowdell of Dorchester and a London medical gentleman by whom he was accompanied to get out for the purpose of attending on his lordship. The professional gentleman found his lordship, we believe, still in a rather precarious state, but on the whole somewhat better.*"

They were wrong. On the 3rd January 1858 the third Earl died and was buried on the estate in what was hoped would be a private funeral. His body lay in a room and the DCC commented "*How different the scene to that which was presented only a few weeks back when he who now lay silent in the last long sleep of mortality presided in that same room to listen to the Melbury choristers..*" Two of the four stewards were John Martin and his son Arthur together with Mr Basket the local solicitor and Mr Fitzgerald.

Family Life.

We know from the 1810 [29] diary that Martin was living in Evershot but we cannot say whereabouts. Nor in this diary are there any references to any personal farming activities. Marriage however must have led to a reappraisal of his priorities for in 1817 we find him mentioned for the first time in the land tax returns where he is shown as occupying land owned by Adam Rowland. Later land tax returns specify the land occupied as "Rowland's Courtlands"¹⁷ [although it appears that Lord Ilchester also owned a part of these lands] and this continues until 1832 after which no more land tax returns are found. Throughout this period he was a leaseholder, as evidenced by the qualifications for the Jurors list but by 1838 the Tithe Map of Evershot lists Martin as the owner of plot 16 "*Dwelling House Stable, Offices, Garden etc.*" which was next to the Acorn Inn. Apart from the cars I doubt whether Evershot has changed much over the centuries- with one important exception. John Martin's house has been knocked down although a part of what may have been his boundary wall survives, and been replaced by a modern house.



17 Plot 249 on the Evershot Tithe Map

John and Mary had four children together and their stories are not happy although when one looks at other records of this era they were not untypical. We sometimes forget how tenuous life was in earlier times.

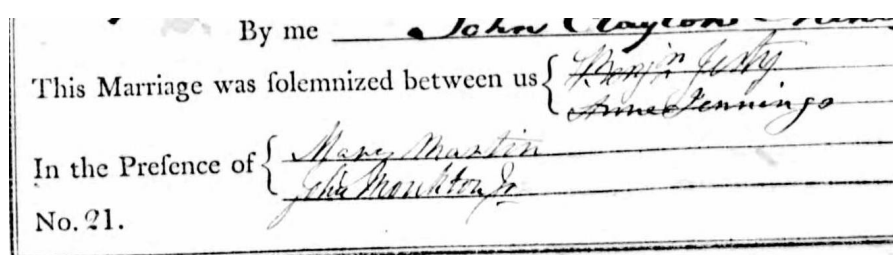
Their first child, Eleanor, was born in 1818 [37], but there are no entries about her in the 1821 diary and its not until the 1827 diary, when she was aged 9, that we first hear of her when, in July, John; *“Went to Yeovil respecting Eleanor going to school”*. In the same month there are two entries in the accounts section. The first states: *“paid for Eleanor £0-4s-0d”* [although what for is not known] and later, *“paid for dessent [sic] spoon knife and fork for Eleanor to take to school £0-15s-0d”*. On the 6th August *“Eleanor went to Yeovil school Mrs Frys”* for which he incurred a charge: *“Hire of Carriage 7/-s”*. Pigots Directory records the existence of Mrs Fry’s school in the Kingston region of Yeovil. Eleanor’s school fees were not cheap for in December he paid £17-5s-0d for a half years schooling. He clearly had an enlightened attitude to the education of women for, allowing for inflation, this is in line with what he paid for his sons. After this there are no more entries in the diaries about her but a notice appeared in the newspapers in 1830; *“November 24th after a lingering and painful illness borne with unexampled patience, Eleanor the justly beloved daughter of John Martin of Evershot”*. She was buried on 29th November at St Osmunds in Evershot although I have been unable to find any trace of her grave.

The next child, Edwin Jennings Martin was baptised on 14th June 1820 [39] but his first appearance in the diaries isn’t until 9th April 1832 [51] when Martin went *“to Dorchester and had Edwin measured for new clothes”* doubtless because, in July, they *“Went to Dorchester with Edwin to School”*.

On the 26th October, in the 1821[46] diary we find *“Caroline born 10 mins past 8 in the evening”* and there is a baptismal record from 1st November, but after that she is not heard of again in the diary and sadly she died and was buried on 8th October 1823 aged 2.

The last child was also a boy, born on January 8th 1827 and Martins entry was; *“Went to Wraxall with my cows. Mrs Martin put to Bed of a Son ¼ past 8 O Clock in the Evening named Arthur”*.

1838 [57] was to be an “annus horribilis” for the Martin family. Martins wife, Mary, appears rarely in the diaries usually as an entry in the accounts: *“Mrs Martin £5 for housekeeping”* but otherwise almost nothing. In 1819 her sister Ann married Benjamin Jesty [who appears in the diaries] and Mary acted as a witness:



Mrs Martin,¹⁸ appears only as entries in the accounts when he “Pd Mrs Martin £5” or something similar and prior to 1838 has only one entry in the diary when on August 21st *“Mrs Martin went to*

18 Martin uses abbreviated Christian names for men but never for women who are always “Mrs”.

Wood Street”. Unfortunately for her she appears most in the diaries just before her death. On Thursday 26th April after working all day on the Godmanstone Inclosure Martin returned home to find “*Mrs Martin taken very ill*”. He follows this up on the 27th with, “*Mrs Martin very ill*”. Clearly things did not improve as the next entry, on the 1st May Martin wrote: “*Stratton Commutation-numbering Rough Map. Edwin went to Ilminster after Arthur- His Dear Mother very Ill.*” for which he “*Gave Edwin to go after Arthur -5s*” presumably to cover the expense of fetching Arthur from his school in Ilminster. Next day, 2nd May, he wrote: “*Mrs Martin is worse today*”. At some stage he “*Paid Boy going after Dr Graves -3s 6d*” to fetch Dr Graves, of Bridport to attend her. The good doctor was paid three guineas [£3-3s-0d].

Throughout this period he was continuing to work however and whilst on the 9th May “*Mrs Martin much worse and sinking fast, Stratton Commutation*” he was also still “*working on the particulars fair map etc and rent charges*”. He was working the next day on the Stratton Commutation still but on the 11th; “*My Dear Wife expired 10 minutes before 3 this morning leaving us in the greatest distress -Aged 54 years*”. The next day he was “*Attending the Corfe Rate ½ day. ½ day about Stratton map &c*”. Mary Martin was buried the following week on the 17th [no mention of work on that day] and on the 21st Edwin took Arthur back to Ilminster. In October he “*Pd Henry Conway for Coffin £6 6s 0d*”.

Between this diary and the next there is a seven year gap so we have no entries that can throw light on his life at this time. By 1845 [64] however things have moved on. On the 10th January we learn that “*Edwin moved to Redlynch to Live*”. The double underlining of “*Live*”, doubtless reflects his feelings on a beloved child leaving home permanently and he gave him £20, perhaps as a house warming present. Whereas Edwin had been working with his father until this time it appears he now had taken up an appointment with the Earl of Ilchester who still had lands in Redlynch and possibly still lived there as on another occasion John “*attends*” Lord Ilchester at Redlynch. Edwin visits his father sporadically in 1845. On November 14th John had been surveying for the Exeter Yeovil and Dorset railway at Netherbury when, he wrote “*finished the job as also Edwin his*” indicating perhaps they were working on some piece of work together even though up until this point Edwin had not been mentioned as being present at Netherbury although Arthur was.

In 1845 Arthur is now 18 and taking a part in the family business so we find him helping his father sort out the workings of a new theodolite, taking the Abbotsbury Tithe award to Abbotsbury and the Dewlish award to Dewlish in July. The impression is however that he is not quite as active in the business as Edwin was.

Edwin married in 1847 and Arthur in 1849 and it is convenient to follow their careers separately.

Edwin Jennings Martin.

At some stage Edwin met Frances Dibble, a Hampshire girl and in August 1847 they married, the newspapers recording that; “*On Thursday last, at Mitchelmarsh, by the Rev.-Morrice, Edwin Jennings Martin esq of Shipton [sic] Montague, Somerset, to Frances daughter of Mr Dibble of Mitchelmarsh.*”

Here is another family who was important in Martins life as there were numerous Dibbles in Evershot and surrounds, most of them farmers but the relationships between them have not been pursued.

A daughter, Augusta Mary was born to Edwin and Frances in 1849 in Bristol¹⁹ and in the 1851 census we find them at Shepton Montague living in a cottage at Wellham where Edwin, by this time, had a fairly extensive household. In addition to two house servants and a groom, there was a nurse, Elizabeth Martin²⁰ and another man, almost certainly her son George. It is again surely too much of a coincidence that they share the same name. Edwin is described as a land surveyor in this census.

On 28th June 1852 [71]the diary entry reads "*Working on the Child Okeford Rate Wet weather Courtland finished mowing*" and then at the top, seemingly written in afterwards, "*Edwin's wife died*". It is probable that Frances died in child birth as on July 17th a baby, Frances Martin was baptised in Shepton Montague. Interestingly the parents are recorded as Edwin Jennings Martin and Frances Martin [even though the latter was dead they clearly felt it important to record the fact that she was still one of the parents]. In this entry Edwin Jennings Martin is recorded as being "*Steward to the Earl of Ilchester*".

On 14th August another diary entry reads "*Edwin and Child left*". Had they been visiting? If so Martin does not record their arrival and which child was it? Was it Edwin and Augusta or Edwin and the newborn Frances. Things did not end happily as in October 1852 baby Frances also died, aged 4 months.

The next we hear of Edwin is in 1854 when on 22nd February John "*went down to Edwins*" and next day, "*Edwin was ill*". Shortly afterwards Martin "*Paid Mr Fields bill for Edwin £30-17s-0d*". Could this be a surgeons fee? Edwin must have recovered though as a few months later John was to pay £1-6s-3d in insurance fees and there are several entries in 1854 where Edwin came to see him, the last being in September when he came for a couple of days and went shooting but it was not for long; Edwin died the following year in Weymouth as noted in the Dorset County Chronicle "*Martin-Aug. 29 at Weymouth, at Weymouth, Edwin Jennings Martin Esq, of Shepton Montague, near Bruton, aged 35.*" He was buried on 3rd September 1855 at Shepton Montague.

Two articles in the newspaper are of some interest. On the 20th October 1855 Sidney M Cornelius had the honor to sell by Auction some time in November next, "*The whole of the HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE and Effects, the property of the late Edwin Jennings Martin Esq of Shepton Montague. Comprising an elegant assortment of drawing-room, dining-room, office, and bedroom furniture, very handsome dinner service, choice collections of oil paintings, wines, books, fine toned harmonium, [by Alexandre], kitchen and dairy utensils, phaeton, dog-cart, and two Whitchapels, [by Hill], single and double harness, horse clothing complete, mare and foal, entire pony, Alderney cow, large marquee suitable for club and other meetings, and other effects, full particulars of which will appear in future advertisements and catalogues.*"

19 Thanks to Modean116 on ancestry for this information.

20 ? some other relative

The above furniture, carriages etc are of most modern description and nearly all new and will be sold without reserve.”

It may seem strange that Edwin's estate was sold without reserve indicating possibly that John just wanted to be rid of his dead sons effects. When Mary Martin died in May 1838 there some seven months of entries remaining in the diaries during which time we see no expressions of grief or loss. In the year Edwin died we have no diary and the next is in 1861 some 6 years after his death. The lack of entries when Mary died may seem surprising to modern eyes but it was a different world then. As mentioned previously on the 4th January 1861 “*Frederick Earl came here*” and on the 5th January “*Frederick Earl left*” and besides giving him £1, Martin also “*gave him some of Edwin’s Clothing*”. We can only speculate why he retained the clothes for so long.

The size of his estate may surprise us as he was only 35 when he died but his employment, recorded on the baptismal record of baby Frances, is given as “*Chief Steward to the Earl of Ilchester*” doubtless a lucrative job. In addition under the will of William Jennings, who had died in 1854, he had been left £2000 with the promise of more to come once Susannah Jennings, Williams wife had died. On the basis of this he had also borrowed money. The Sherborne Mercury in March 1858 reported a case, “*Martin vs The West of England, Fire and Life Insurance Company*”, brought before the Vice Chancellors court at Shepton Montague.

In May 1855 Edwin had borrowed £2500 from the insurance company covering the loan with an insurance policy of £5000 and a mortgage of his share in the estate of Mr William Jennings. Jennings had left the life interest in his estate to his wife Susannah Jennings. It was expected, given that she was over 80 years old that she would die first at which time Edwin would inherit part of the estate. In July 1855 he requested a further loan of £1500 and this was agreed to so long as he took out another policy on his own life but this was organised with the United Kent Life Assurance company. The first premium was paid and the West of England company retained the policy. but on the 27th August he died suddenly. The Martin estate paid off the loan of £2500 and then claimed the monies due under both policies but found that the original £1500 which should have been paid to Edwin before he died had been paid instead to the West of England insurance company. The Martin estate sued in court to reclaim this money and won.

It is probably no coincidence that in November 1855 John made a new will which for the most part is sadly illegible although it appears he gave most of his money to Arthur with a bequest of £100 to his granddaughter [probably Augusta] who he acknowledges is amply provided for under the will of William Jennings. Augusta was not to enjoy the fruit of her inheritance dying on 31st December 1863 aged 14. The legal marriage age for boys was 14 and for girls 12²¹ and it is interesting that both her burial record and also her will [she had an estate worth less than £2000] refer to her as a spinster.

Arthur Martin

Arthur was born on 14th January 1827 [46] and had a somewhat happier story, although even for him it was marred by tragedy. He married in 1849 and he was living at Evershot in 1851 with his wife Martha [and John]. In the 1861 census he is still living in Evershot but

21 Subsequently raised to 16 in The Age of Marriage Act 1929.

independently of his father. By now he and Martha have three children, a governess and three other servants; he is also looking after Edwin's daughter, Augusta Maud, who is now aged 12. He still describes himself as a Land Agent. In 1858 he is Steward of the Manors of Evershot and Frome St Quinton. By 1871 he has another child and has already sent his oldest son [also Arthur b 1851] to Oxford. In 1853 the manor of Rampisham was sold to Lord Auckland but he put it up for sale in 1871 and Arthur appears to have bought it, for in 1881 he is living in Rampisham in the Manor house and is now described as Magistrate of the County of Dorset. Arthur Jnr is now described as a Gentleman and owns 200 acres. In 1891 somewhat surprisingly he has moved back to Evershot, although the manor is not sold, and is occupying his dad's old house next the Acorn Inn. He is still a Magistrate and so too is Arthur Jnr.

It appears that Arthur Jnr was epileptic for in July 1891 he died. At the time he was living on the coast at Seaton. The newspaper article announcing his death describes the funeral arrangements. Messrs R & E Damon of Yeovil were in charge *"Mr R Damon personally superintended the removal of the corpse from Seaton to Rampisham. It was conveyed to Yeovil Junction by train and from thence to Rampisham by road. At the top of Rampisham Hill it was met by the tenants on the estate of the deceased's father, they preceded the hearse to the Manor House where the coffin was transferred to a hand bier decorated with beautiful flowers and conveyed to the church.....on every hand there were signs of the great esteem in which the deceased was held, blinds being drawn at almost every house in the village."*

Arthur snr was clearly popular as this note from 1899 records: *"A few weeks since the family of the Lord of the Manor held the celebration of the golden wedding of Mr and Mrs Martin. When the event became known in the parish several of the Manor tenants wished to give to the happy couple some present which should be not only a memorial of the occasion but a mark of the good will and harmony which have marked relations between them and their landlord. A few friends and neighbours who were not servants expressed their desire to join in the testimonial.....Mr M Jenkins for the tenants and the Rector for friends and neighbours waited on Mr and Mrs Martin and presented them with a handsome silver bowl. Both the Lord and Lady of the Manor evidently felt deeply the friendliness which had prompted the gift..."*

In 1896 Arthur was made high Sheriff of Dorset. By the 1901 census he is to be found back at Rampisham Manor; the census having been taken in March he only had a few more months to live before passing away in December 1901.

John Martin himself was to live until 1863 [82] but I can find no mention of his death in the papers other than a short note in the DCC: *"Martin: April 14th of disease of the heart. John Martin aged 84."*

Martin was not shy of recording the state of his health and there are several references to his being *"unwell"* in the diaries. In the 1810 we find the first entry about his health, on the 28th October *"At Farley Bad Cold"* it did not stop him working however for the next day he was *"Out all day measuring...cold still very bad"*. On the 30th he was *"Out all day Levi Parsons and his Cousin for chain- cold no better"* nor was it on the 31st as he was still *"Out all day cold no better"*. November 1st simply says *"Pitton and Farley out all day"* and on the 4th he was dining with a Mr Cook so he was clearly feeling better. A decade and more later, in December 1821 he was *"Ruling Lord Holland Accounts and unwell"* with the next day *"Very unwell in [sic]bowel complaint"*. His

concern for health was not confined to himself however in October 1838 he “*Gave Edwin to go after Arthur -The Scarlatina being in the school } 7s 6d*”. Edwin went to Ilminster to collect him and bring him home. Scarlet Fever [Scarlatina] is caused by a bacteria ²²usually started with a severe sore throat, caused a bright red “strawberry” tongue, then a rash and in some was complicated by joint and heart problems [rheumatic fever and heart disease]. It was extremely serious before the advent of Penicillin as a contemporary report describes “*at Rattery Vicarage, of scarlatina, after the short illness of one week, the Rev Joshua Reynolds Johnston Vicar of Rattery aged 43.*” There are several entries in the diary where he records taking medicine but only one case, in 1838, where he records where he got it from “*Pd Dr Wallis for medicine 7s 6d*”. Usually he just paid for medicine without any indication as to who gave it to him.

In August 1821 he was a juror at the Dorchester assize for two days, as he was again in 1827, but in the 1832 diary when he was called again all was not well: on the 10th March he went to Dorchester “*to get off from serving on the Jury on acct of deafness.*” We do not know if this was a permanent deafness or temporary but he was successful as, two days later he “*Went to the assizes and was discharged from serving on the Jury*”. It did not stop him from serving on the court at Evershot in October 1852 when he rather proudly recorded, “*I was foreman of the jury,*” even though it cost him 18s in expenses. He was foreman one more time in November 1854 so one wonders if his deafness was as profound as he claimed. It was the last time he was to attend the court, on 3rd October 1861 he noted it was taking place but did not attend.

Martins experience with his daughters Caroline and Eleanor must have made him extremely anxious when any of the family fell ill so we can imagine his consternation when on April 21st 1852 his grandson fell ill: “*At home made out Valuation of Plush for Mr Coombs [Little man very ill]*”. John always referred to Arthur [Jnr] as little man and whatever the problem that Arthur [Jnr] had, it was not to be over quickly as on 22nd “*At Home on Various [Child still very ill]*” although luckily on 25th he was “*At Home- Child still Ill but rather better.*” It wasn’t until the 28th that he noted “*Little Man better*”

His illnesses rarely stopped him working as the entries are often like this from January 1845 [63] when he “*Took Medicine²³ and looking over bills*”, Martin himself seems to have enjoyed good health until 1854[73] when in January a whole week was marked up “*Laid up in a bad cough and cold*” [sic] and in November over several weeks he was “*Troubled with the Rheumatick*”. It is difficult to know what this might have been; diagnosis, even if made by a physician, was as useless as the medicine prescribed for it, rheumatick being a very vague term. All this has disappeared fortunately by 1861 [80] but on February the 26th he “*[Had a Fall from the Horse]*” albeit not serious enough to stop him coursing as in the same entry he wrote, “*Went Coursing at Chantmarle with Arthur and Mr Wm Pope Dined at Arthurs*”. The fall had shaken him however as for the next two days he was “*At Home rather Unwell*”. He must have recovered however as for the rest of the diary he appears to continue in robust health and there is certainly no mention of any long term effects from the fall or of the heart problem that was eventually to kill him.

22 Beta Haemolytic Streptococcus

23 Which cost him 5s.

In 1855 after Edwin's death John made a new will, which I find difficult to transcribe, but certain parts are clear: *"I give unto my Granddaughter Augusta Mary Martin the sum of one hundred pounds to be paid to her on her attaining the age of twenty one or the day of her marriage which shall first happenand I give the said sum one hundred pounds as a mark of my affection for my said granddaughter and not as a provision for her she being amply provided for under the will of the late William Jennings.."*

The balance of his estate, which would later be valued at £12,000 was left to his son Arthur. He is buried in the church yard of St Osmunds in Evershot in a rather grand tomb which has survived in fairly good condition. The inscription on the side right hand side says simply *"In memory of John Martin Esq"* with, on the foot of the tomb the date 1863 and on the left hand side *"and his wife Mary Martin died 1838"*



Life in the 19th century was precarious and it is in this area more than any other that we detect the difference between life then and now. Choosing a page at random from the burial records in Evershot there were 64 burials between and May 1812 and April 1820. Of these no less than 15 were of children less than 1 year old, 2 were of children under 10, and 3 were children under 18. In Martins immediate circle William Jennings [Jnr] lost his only son as an infant, John Jennings lost a daughter aged 13 and a son at 19 [plus Joseph Crew and Thomas as adults], Martin himself lost Caroline and Eleanor as children and Edwin as an adult, and Edwin lost his wife, his infant daughter and had he survived, his twelve year old daughter.

A Portrait of the Surveyor as a man.

The 1810[29] diary is the only one where we might expect to get any idea of Martin as a young man but it is not in reality much different to the later diaries being almost exclusively devoted to work. There is one entry of some interest and it occurs in the accounts section in February 1810 [although it bears the legend: *"27th Nov 1809 Bishopstone Inclosures"*].

"Mr Anger bets with Mr Kent that the Bishopstone Comon is 340 acres

Mr Kent bets it is not

Mr Anger bets with Mr Kent that its 7 Furlong from one Comon Gate to the other Mr Kent bets it is not

Mr Crowdy bets with Mr Kent that Bishopstone Comon is 340 Acres Mr Kent bets it is not

Mr Martin bets with Mr Anger that it is not more than 4 ½ around Bishopstone Comon Mr Anger bets its more”

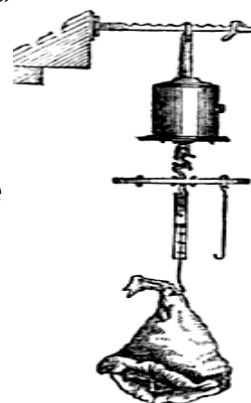
The outcome of the wager is not sadly recorded but it is likely that he enjoyed a wager as there are several entries to him going to the races at Dorchester and Blandford. There are a couple of odd entries in March 1821 he “*gave to luck 1s*” and in October 1845 he made an enigmatic entry “*Pd Luck money and Expenses at the Fair-6s*”, was this the name of someone he paid or just his gambling money? In general when he made an entry such as this he would specify “Mr so and so” or “John so and so” and in the first entry luck is lower case so I incline to the gambling money theory. The 1810 diary contains more information about his working methods but little else about his personal life.

Domesticity.

Following his marriage it come as no surprise that by 1821 [40] domestic matters start to appear in his diary. The entries regarding his wife are sadly disappointing in their lack of detail and virtually confined to “*Pd Mrs Martin to pay bills -£10*”. As mentioned before there is but one entry in the diaries about her [other than her her death] which comes in August 1827 “*Mrs Martin went to Wood Street²⁴*”. The only Wood Street that I can find refers to a farm near Wool. Meanwhile Martin himself went to Blandford in regard to the Inclosure award and four days later he also went to Wood Street although there is no further mention of her.

The 1821 diary reads like that of a couple of newly weds setting up home. In January he paid £1- 6 -7d for lead guttering and a whopping £2- 8s- 6d for a picture frame. In February 2s-8d for a dog chain and in March he paid William Jennings £7-18s-4d “*Five Years insurance of my house up to Xmas 1821*”.²⁵ In April, 14s went on a dozen small knives and forks, in May 1s on a pencil and in June “*Pd Mrs Meech for a slab of paint 4s*”²⁶ together with 12s 4d for white lead. It wasn’t until August 20th though that he got round to using it for “*Colouring Passage up Stairs &c*”. It may be that he did not have quite enough for his purposes as another entry in August reads “*Pd Rose Pink &c 2/6d*”. This might have been used to paint the house or mixed with other colours to colour his maps. He may have had some paint left over from his original slab because in another entry from December he “*Paid colouring room 3s*” even though there is no other mention of it in the diary.

In December he paid £1-2s-6d for a “*roasting jack & wire*” [opposite] and in February 1827 6s for the carriage from Yeovil of Hay and “*Dutch Oven paint*” which would seem to indicate that the family were still cooking over an open hearth, and it is here that the diaries illustrate the changing social history of the times. In November 1821 we get the first references in the diary of payments for coal: the first to Mr Day for 35 cwt of coals £2 18s 4d and the second to Isaac Frampton £1 -13s -4d for 20 cwt.



24 The only Woodstreet I can find is near Wool.

25 This is one of a couple of entries when he paid insurance seemingly in arrears ,a rather curious arrangement.

26 It wasn’t until the 1860’s that ready to use paint became available. Until then the pigment slab had to be ground up and added to linseed oil or hide glue and water.

It's often forgotten that coal only began to be mined seriously in the 19th century, its use in a domestic setting had to wait on two things.

The first was the development of effective ways of burning the stuff. It was not until the late 1790's that Count Rumford developed a new fireplace that would make efficient use of an open grate for heating and whilst stoves for cooking were developed at the same time, the first ones were wood burning and it was not until the early 1800's that coal [anthracite] burning ones became widely available. It is doubtful though whether coal would have taken off as a domestic fuel whilst the bulk of the population lived in the countryside. It was only when people became separated from the ability to find their own fuel, in the form of wood, that coal stood a chance. In the new industrial towns it was clearly impracticable for factory workers to gather wood but in the country, whilst any remnant of common land existed the people would continue to burn wood. Critics of the inclosure movement, pointed to the hardship caused by inclosure of the common.

As the industrial revolution proceeded a virtuous circle developed, or at least so it seemed at the time. More coal meant more iron meant more demand for coal and more iron to burn it in. Eventually it became more economical to adapt fireplaces to Rumfords pattern and similarly the price of grates and stoves fell. In 1838 Martin "*Paid Waygood & Co for Office grate and Fender etc £2-2s-0d*". This was Richard Waygood "*Founder and Engineer, Contractor for Public Works, Manufacturer of Gas Apparatus, Steam boilers.....*" based in Weymouth. Two guineas does not sound much but it was half a girl servants wages for the year and beyond the means of many. In 1861 he "*Pd Mrs Arthur for Grate of Dunham Bridport and Lamp &c &c of her £5 15s 0d*". The grate was laid in the kitchen in May. Presumably the lamp was an oil lamp and in July he "*Pd 1 years lighting £1 1s 0d*"

We sometimes get a glimpse of life at home, in October 1821 he paid a guinea to "*Mrs Seymour for chest of drawers*" and in 1827 he "*Pd for Carpet Purchased at Mrs Corps sale £2 12s 6d*" [although the sale itself is not mentioned]. Where he put the carpet is not known but he bought more in 1838 paying Mr Edwards of Yeovil for it, but the whole house cannot have been carpeted for in April 1845 in an entry that could have come from the medieval period he "*Pd Mr Paul for a load of reeds for litter £2 -12s -6d*". He bought more in August for 3s and then no more until February 1854 when he he bought from Mr A Young and Mr Coker "*Lime and Reed - £3 - 1s-8d*". House hold expenses are occasionally mentioned: in May 1827 he paid £2-15-5d to a Mr Richards for "*New door in front and New locks &c*" and 2s to a Mr Ways for mending his windows. The windows seem to have been fragile for he "*Paid Rendall £1 6 11d*" in December 1838 to repair them and in September 1845 he may have accidentally broken one, for he paid Rendall again for "*mending parlour glass door &c*".

In August 1854 he appears to have decided a makeover was due as he "*Went to Yeovil and ordered Paper for House and a Carpet for the Great Parlour &c*" as well as "*Pd for a shammy and sponge 2s 6d*". Keeping a tidy house was clearly of some importance in 1854 as in May he "*Pd Cleaning table cover 2s*". Purely domestic matters then go quiet until In December 1861 he decided to refresh things paying "*Mr Geake papering and small side board £12 - 15.*" There are several other entries about the house, thus we find him buying, besoms [brooms], flower glasses [sic], "*articles*" and carpentry.

Servants.

After the death of his wife in 1838 Martin clearly had need of someone to help run his household. In August he "*Paid Susan for Balance of Wages up to May 16s9d followed by Do ¼ wages to 1st August £2 12s 6d*" and again in December he "*Pd Susan ½ years wages £5 5s 0d*" and shortly after "*Pd Susan what she paid for me 5s 2d*" and after that "*Pd her on account of house - 10s*". This was Susan Frampton who is mentioned in the 1841 census when she was 20 years old [according to the census]. There were a number of Framptons in the village but the only Susan, was baptised in 1816 which would have made her 25. Her salary of £10 10s would probably have been supplemented by her accommodation and food but its a useful benchmark when we consider other expenses. For example in October 1838 he "*Paid for a watch for Edwin £12*" in other words a watch cost more than a servants annual wage. Even a watch chain which he bought in 1852 was just under a half years wages at £2 6s 0d. In today's world if something breaks we tend to throw it away and buy another but not so in 1852: "*Pd mending watch key 9d*". Susan seems to have come and gone as on 17th June 1845 "*Susan the servant girl came*". It is difficult to know whether he was a good person to work for but by the 1851 census Susan had left and Isabella Fountain aged 27 was employed hopefully ably assisted by Prudence Miller aged 15. On 14th Feb 1854 he notes "*Elizabeth Dunford came as Servant Girl*" and it is not clear why Isabella Fountain left him but it may have been to get married as on 6th May 1854 "*Mrs Fountain came as Servant*". How long she stayed for is not clear but in April 1861 he had two servants living with him one of whom might have been Ann Sartain but the writing is not clear and in any case on 7th November "*new servant girl came £4 a year*". This does not seem to be large wage even by the standards of the time.

Clothes.

How Mrs Martin supported herself we cannot say for the diary only records entries he made on his own behalf. As the young surveyor about town it was important for him to be dressed well, thus in 1810 [29] he "*Pd Taylor for new waistcoat - 18s*" whilst in October he "*paid for a pair of gaiters - 7s*". If off the peg clothing was suitable in 1810 he clearly had a little more money to spare by 1821: "*Paid Mr Shepherd of Bridport for Black cloth for a coat and w. coat - £3-11s-0d*" and in May it was made up, "*Paid Danielle and Beachem Bill for Grt Coat -£3-15-9d*". 3s went on gloves in June and £1 11s 5d in October on a pair of trousers. In November 1821 he bought what must have been an absolute necessity for a surveyor, as well as being at the height of fashion, a pair of boots. Sometime around 1815 the Arthur Wellesley asked his shoemaker to modify a pair of boots; the new boot rapidly caught on and Martin clearly found them irresistible as he "*Pd Sydenham of Yeovil for a pair of Wellington Boots £1-8s-0d*". In December he "*Paid Knells bill for shoes &c - £1-17s-4d*"²⁷. In June 1827 he splashed out 5s 6d on a silk handkerchief [and 5s on "*handker chiefs*" for Edwin] and £1 -5s -0d for a new hat whilst later in the same year he made the following enigmatic entry "*Paid for Silk Hank. and Rhubarb 6s*". In Dec 1827 another 19s 6d went on two pairs of shoes that he bought whilst working in Beaminster.

Sadly in 1838 he "*Paid for a hat for Arthur 18s 0d*" presumably so he could look respectable when he attended his mothers funeral. Thereafter the number of entries about

27 One of two shoe makers in the village.

clothing diminishes although there are several entries such as “Pd Mr Tilly Tailor £4 12s 6d” throughout the diaries [although this entry was from March 1838]. In 1854 he “Pd for a pair of spurs 10s 6d” and also “Pd Mr Collins Coal and Clothing club - £1” with underneath this entry “Pd expenses at club and subscription £1. In November he “Pd for Gloves etc 9s”. Finally in January 1861 he “Pd Mrs Conway for shirting 3s”.

The finer things in life.

On August 17 1832 he spent the morning “Doing various jobsand went to Girt²⁸ in the afternoon to a Pick-nick”. Martin’s spelling and grammar is not always what we would expect today. In August 1845 he “Had tea party” and on May 13 1861 held a “dinner party” and there are several other entries of this sort, sometimes the participants are named, such as William Jennings, but none give any details of interest. Tea on the other hand seemed to be a matter of great interest as he took great care to account for how much he ordered and how long it lasted. The first entry comes from 1852 when he “Pd Mansell Horne and Co for ten pounds of tea - £2” but there are no other entries until the 1854 diary when there are no less than four. The first, in February, notes that he “Pd Horne Robines and Co tea £2” and in May a more comprehensive entry “Pd Horne Robines and Co 2 Bucklasbury for 15 [lb] of tea of which 5 lb Mr Jestys 18/4 £2 - 15 -0d” In October he “Sent Robines/Horne and Co for two pounds worth of tea £2” In the diary section for October he made the following entry “Attending at Westwoods- Men repairing the Barn & went to Ransom” then seemingly randomly he has added “[The last tea lasted 22 weeks [[38 scratched out]] 10 pounds]”.

“Horne, Robins and Co, late Mansell, Horne and Co 2 Bucklersbury, Cheapside” were tea merchants and their adverts make fascinating reading; the first states that “the patronage of the public has elevated it [them] into one of the LARGEST IN THE TRADE.” They were able to supply the public on trade terms and “the facilities afforded by railway communication has enabled us to do this to consumers in all parts of the Kingdom Free of carriage”. Tea had first been taxed in 1773 and some form of tax on tea persisted until 1964.²⁹ “The recent alteration in the Tea Duties enables us to make a general Reduction of Fourpence per pound” and it may have been this that stimulated Martins spending on tea. He does not specify which tea he bought but there were many he could have, including Gunpowder tea [a pelleted form of tea named for its resemblance to gunpowder] and their famous “Uncoloured Tea”. This was a “tea..in its natural state of perfection. As it is entirely free from any colouring matter it is strongly recommended to the public as a great luxury. Sold in Lead packets from 1oz to 1 lb.” I wonder what the lead added to the flavour?

As well as tea parties Evershot offered a range of other delights, music being the principal one. There was a strong tradition of music in the village, particularly a church choir and the first reference I found was in December 1854 “Paid subscription to singers £1”. Next year the Dorsetshire Salisbury and Winchester Journal noted “We are as much pleased as surprised to find that a Vocal Entertainment for the 8th June has been announced to take place in the lone locality of Evershot. Music has however, we are happy to say, had much attention in these parts recently. In the surrounding churches Choral services are performed; and the Concert we allude to will be given

28 Girt Farm Evershot

29 <https://www.plymouthtea.co.uk/blogs/news/37929093-the-history-of-tea-in-the-uk>

by the Evershot Choir for a charitable purpose.” We do not know what the charity was but next year they raised £2 12s 6d for the Dorset County Hospital. There is no mention of Martin attending these events but it is highly likely that he did, since as we will see Arthur is known to have accompanied them on the harmonium. 1856 was a busy year in Evershot for on 30th March the Treaty of Paris had been signed ending the Crimean war and in the Dorset County Herald it was announced that *“Thursday 29th May was a day of rejoicing in Evershot. Subscriptions had been raised and the money was spent in providing a substantial fare and amusement. At an early hour the bells sent forth a merry peal and the work of decoration commenced. The Yeovil band who had been engaged for the day, arrived about 11 o’clock and enlivened the town with its superior music. In the afternoon various amusements took place in Melbury Park, where two hogsheads of beer and an equivalent amount of bread and cheese was distributed. In the evening there was a good display of fireworks. Everything passed off in a most satisfactory manner.”* Later in the year a *“Vocal Concert was given by the church choir in the school-room”* and the list of guests refer to *“Mrs A Martin and party; Mr Baskett and party....J Martin Esq”*. It is possible that Arthur was playing in the concert which is why his wife headed her own party.

The number of entries in the newspapers concerning musical activity in Evershot is highest in 1856 but it is likely that there were many other such concerts at which John would have attended.

Man does not live by tea alone and there are a number of entries concerning food and drink. In January 1821 he paid 9s for 9lb of hops, the first evidence that we have of him brewing his own beer. He was clearly not a vegetarian as in March of that year he paid 3s for veal and 1s for a Bullocks head. Thankfully the last such order. In this diary he also buys fish [1s] but this is something that he does only in this diary.

Cheese seems to have been a particular favourite of his, in May 1827 he paid £2-5s-0d to a James Ellis for cheese and in 1832 he bought two cheeses the first is recorded simply as *“Pd for a cheese -15s”* but the second is more enigmatic *“Pd uncle Thomas for a cheese 12s”*. Cheese was on the menu again in 1854 when he *“Pd John Peach for cheese 7s 6d”*.

In the early years gin was one of his favourite drinks it first appears in August 1821 when he paid £2-10s-0d although the quantity is not given. In November 1827 he *“Pd Mr Yeatman for two gallons of gin £1- 6s – 0d* and two lines below *“Pd Mr Cave for Gin £1 12s 0d”*. The Cave brothers are listed in Kelly’s directory as Linen manufacturers and Maltsters which seems an unusual combination of occupations. There are no more purchases of gin from now on, just spirits. Nationally the Gin Craze, which had started in the 18th century, was passing, was he ashamed of mentioning what he was drinking or had he moved on to other spirits instead? A selection of bills for alcohol are shown below.

August 1821	<i>“Pd for Brandy £2 12s”</i>
April 1838	<i>“Pd Mr Pope for spirits £3 5s 9d”</i>
Dec 1838	<i>“Pd Mr Trenchards bill including two hogsheads of cider £44 5s 0d”</i> this is about 490 litres.
April 1845	<i>“Pd Mr Balster for wine etc £27-16s – 0d”</i>
June 1845	<i>“Pd Mrs Russell [Acorn] gallon of Gin 12s”</i>

May 1852	<i>"Pd Wm Cave for Malt £5 14s [Arthur paid the 14/-]"</i>
March 1854	<i>"Pd Calder and sons spirits £5- 6s -0d"</i>
May 1854	<i>"Pd Mr Hine for Rum £1 15s 9d"</i> <i>"Pd Mr Bollen for Spirits £1 2s 0"</i>
Aug 1854	<i>"Pd Mr Caves Malt bill £8 -13s -0d"</i>

Martin was not only a consumer of alcohol but a producer as well 13th March 1854 *"At Home Had M...d my Cider Back from Summer Lodge – [a Sheep died]"*. Summer Lodge, now a Hotel was part of the Ilchester estate and in 1871 was occupied by Arthur. We can imagine that he brewed his own beer too else what was the malt for? An entry in the same year 1854 *"Pd Gamis for cigars – 16s"* indicates that he enjoyed a good smoke as well.

Gardening.

From 1821 the diaries show that he had an interest in gardening as in December he paid two sums of 2s and 3d for gardening and on April 26th 1827 he spent the morning *"Sewing seeds etc in the Garden"* and later in the year he paid 8s for a man *"gardening and cleaning out pond"* as well as several other entries concerning gardening and *"weeding"*. In June he paid 4s for *"powder and shot"* and 9d for *"savoy plants"* and, perhaps not unrelated to these two purchases, in November *"Pd for rabbit nets -3s"*. He did not simply employ others however to do the work, in April he went to Ransom and on return spent the afternoon *"doing some works in the garden"*. In the next few diaries there are several entries about gardening, in 1832 he bought a wheelbarrow for £1 4s 0d. He was very fond of trees, in April 1845 he paid 8s 2d for Cherry trees and clearly redevelopment was in the air for in June he *"Attended Men Making New Garden Walk"*; for the most part he was too busy with work to make the garden much of a focus. Its not uncommon to find archaic words in his diaries in 1821 [40] for example he *"Pd for plashing garden hedge 3s and again in 1854 he "Pd John Squib Plashing Garden Hedge – 8s"*; according to Wikipedia *"plashing is a technique of interweaving living and dead branches through a hedge for stock control. Trees are planted in lines, the branches are woven together to strengthen and fill any weak spots until the hedge thickens plashing (an early synonym) was common in gardens from late medieval times to the early eighteenth century, to create shaded paths, or to create a living fence out of trees or shrubs. This craft had been developed by European farmers who used it to make their hedge rows more secure."*

It would appear that Martin was undertaking some major gardening work in April 1854 as trees came to the fore in April 1854 again when he *"Pd Sandiford for Apple Trees & Grafting &c - £4 – 19s – 6d"* and a further *"£3 – 0s – 0 to "Mr Jesty for Giles's working in my garden"*. In 1861 we find him planting pots over a five day period in April by this time he may have found it easier to manage pots than the garden itself.

Country Sports

Martin was a man of his time and as such his leisure time was taken up by hunting, shooting but no fishing. His main leisure activity appears to have been Hare coursing. This first appears in the 1827 diary, the season for him beginning on October 6th when he “*Went to M Newton and Sydling Coursing caught 8 hares and 2 rabbits*”. He was off again on 3rd November when he “*Went Coursing with Mr J J & Mr Coxwell and looked over the School Estate at Kingscombe*”. It is also the first diary where he lists buying a game certificate for £3 14s 6d, a years salary or thereabouts for a servant in 1861 but very necessary since under the 1816 Game Act snaring a rabbit was punishable by transportation. His favourite place to go coursing was Sydling St Nicholas [judged by the number of times he went there] and perhaps not surprisingly there are more entries in the later diaries when he was not so busy working. In 1861 for example he started on 11th February “*At Home went coursing [nil]*” then on 26th -following the fall from his horse “*Went Coursing at Chantmarle with Arthur & Mr Pope – Dined at Arthurs*” and on 15th March loaned his dogs to Mr Pope whilst he “*Went to Yeovil – my Dogs went to Sydling Mr Pope and others caught 3 Hares*”. Things went quiet over the summer but in October³⁰ he was back at Sydling again on two occasions and then finally in December he was at home when he went coursing one more time with Arthur and caught one hare.

Hares came under attack again when he embarked on a new sport which figures in only one diary, that for 1845, and that was beagling. In January, March April and December it was confined to “*Went out with the Beagles*” but in February he expands with a little more detail: Feb 3rd 1845 “*Making a Sketch of Net Mead and went out with the Beagles*” and two weeks later Feb 17th “*Went to Batcombe resptng Poor Rate Expenses and with the Beagles in the afternoon.*” Beagling was not a cheap pastime as in January he had “*Pd for Beagles ½ [presumably year] £5 7s 6d Mr C Jennings paid the other ½*”. Fox hunting [with hounds] did not seem to be a pastime he took up however although he occasionally went to meets, in February 1845 he “*Went to Holywell & Saw the Fox Hounds throw off*”.

Coursing seems to have been one activity that he pursued [no pun intended] throughout his life and shooting was another; the first entry was from 26 November 1827 “*Went shooting at Holway with Major Wilson and dined At Mr Jennings*”. Probably one of his cavalry friends but most of his shooting seems to have been directed towards pest control, principally rooks. Thus from 1832 “*went to Woolcombe Rook shooting*” and again in May 1845 “*Rook shooting at Woolcombe*”. After his shooting in May 1832 he may broken his gun as on 11 June 1832 he “*Pd Mr Stocker for Mr Brown mending the lock of gun 5s*. By September 1854 he had changed his venue to Chelborough.

He was also keen on horse racing although whether for itself or for the business opportunities it provided cannot be determined. The first record from 15th August 1827 records him sewing lettuce and then “*Blandford Races making advertisement of private roads*” [he was working on the Sturminster Newton inclosure at the time]. This would have been quite a journey to undertake from Evershot and is the only time he appears to have gone to Blandford for the racing ; the course was on the site which the army camp currently occupies. However he did stay over in the town spending a modest 4/6d on expenses. In 1838 we find him at Dorchester in

30 Typically the coursing season ran from the beginning of October to the end of February.

September, “*Went to Dorchester Races with Edwin in the Carriage Dined at Mr Caines and Paid him for 30 sheep £46-0s-0d*”. In 1845 he had a high old time; on the 2nd and 3rd September he went shooting followed on the 4th and 5th by two days at Weymouth races.

The Dorset Yeomanry

Rather like modern day train companies the history of the Dorset Yeomanry³¹ is one of continually changing names. The first Dorset Yeomanry was formed in 1794 a year or so after the beginning of the French Revolutionary wars. Two years later they became the Dorsetshire Rangers which survived until 1802 when, after the treaty of Amiens, it was disbanded only to be reformed in 1803 as the Dorsetshire Regiment of Volunteer Yeomanry Cavalry, and it was in this regiment that Martin was made an ensign in 1807. Although he was almost certainly in the regiment in 1810 there are no mentions of any involvement in it and in 1814, it was once again disbanded.....until reformed again in 1830. In 1833 it became “The Princess Victoria's Regiment of Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry” and although Victoria was crowned in 1838 they did not get round to changing the name again until June 1843 when they became the Queen's Own Regiment of Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry. At some point, in what smacks of bureaucratic reorganisation it became the “Dorset Yeomanry (Queen's Own)” based in Dorchester.

“The Yeomanry” has a romantic connotation but it should be remembered that in 1819 the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry had been responsible for the Peterloo massacre when 11-15 people had been killed and many hundreds injured. The Dorset Yeomanry was not involved in the Swing Riots of 1830 [they were in the process of being re-formed] but 400 special constables were raised in Dorchester and a troop of the 9th Lancers mustered in case of trouble. In the event they were never used but the presence of the Yeomanry in the neighbourhood was a potent message to for malcontents amongst the poor.

In April 1832 we get the first reference to his work with the Yeomanry. On the 3rd he “*Went to Rampisham- in the morning and to Melbury House in afternoon respg Troop Work.*” Melbury House was of course the seat of Henry Fox-Strangways who, in 1808 was commissioned Captain in the Dorsetshire Yeomanry and was given a promotion to Major when it was reformed in 1830. He was later to be made Lieutenant-colonel in 1840 and Lieutenant-colonel commandant in 1845 although quite what the difference was between the ranks I do not know.

As is typical with Martin his entries are laconic and add little to our understanding of what he did; luckily in the case of the Yeomanry there are many newspaper entries which describe their activities. Meetings took place at various places and times but the most significant meeting of the year took place in May over a period, usually of 8 days, which he refers to as “*Permanent duty*”. The 1832 meeting of the Yeomanry took place in May [as mostly they did] and is the most comprehensively recorded. Preparations for him began on the 3rd when after “*Attending the Charminster Road Men*” he spent his time “*making out a New Troop Roll for Lord Ilchester*”, on the 10th “*Sent colt to Keep*” ie he sent his horse to the Keep at Dorchester, on the 17th he “*Went to Dorchester and met with the quartermasters and Colonel Frampton resp Quarters &c*” on the 18th “*making out a list of troops for billeting*”. The Yeomanry met at Dorchester on the 22nd and according to the Dorset Chronicle and Somersetshire Gazette of the 31st “*a finer and more*

31 The name used hereafter.

effective volunteer corps was never before raised”. The muster roll “contains the names of about 350 men, who compose five troops, the Melbury, the Dorchester, the Iwerne, the Sherborne and the Vale of Blackmoor troops, respectively under the command of Major The Earl of Ilchester, Captain H Frampton” Martin himself is not named in this article but it was clearly an enjoyable time, “Their stay with us has greatly enlivened the town, which has consequently exhibited..a scene of continued gaiety.” It is easy to see where Thomas Hardy got his ideas from in various novels as the journalism was highly descriptive “The field chosen for their exercise [the race course under Maiden Castle] has been daily thronged by a concourse of fashionable and delighted spectators”. The highlight however was on the Kings Birthday which was “celebrated in a manner which well became the staunch and true Yeoman of Dorset and the loyal town of Dorchester. The jocund bells welcomed the morn with many a merry note and at the summons all prepared for joy and gaiety....the streets were soon thronged to an extent seldom before witnessed displaying everywhere the bevies of the young, the beautiful, the gay.” The weather in May of course can be a bit variable but “The day was the most favourable that could possibly have been conceived; a slight breeze served to fan the air whilst “A sky all cloudless and a lustrous sun” served effectually to dissipate all fears on the score of silks and satins and all the paraphernalia of artificial gracefulness”. At midday Colonels Frampton and Bower inspected the troops who paraded in front of them in half squadrons and single file who “then performed their various evolutions and manoeuvres with a degree of exactness and rapidity which could only have been expected from a long course of training...The adroitness and precision evinced throughout however difficult the manoeuvre were such that many on the ground who had seen much active service extolled them in warm terms at the close of the review.” These manoeuvres must have been quite something to witness, and in 1845 the Dorset County Chronicle was suitably impressed it went to the trouble of listing them:

1. Form Line
2. Change front to right on fourth squadrons
3. wheel to right into columns of troops
4. Form line to rear on rear troop
5. Change position by threes left half back
6. Advance from centre in double columns -change direction to the right – forward
7. Form line to front
8. Close column in rear of the right
9. Take ground to left
10. Squadrons will countermarch by threes
11. Form inverted line to left on first squadron
12. Advance
13. Reverse the front by the wheel about of troops
14. Advance from left in echellon [sic] of squadrons
15. Echellon wheel to the right and advance
16. Form line to the front
17. Retire by alternate squadrons covered by carbineers.
18. Form line – call in carbineers.

19. Form close column on centre squadron- mounted skirmishers covering the formation of the column.
20. Attack by squadrons in succession -wheel outward by threes and form in rear.
21. Deploy into line on centre squadrons
22. Attack in line
23. Retire. Advance in open order and salute.

If the horsemanship was impressive the shooting was perhaps less so. At 3pm the carbineers assembled for rifle practice and to shoot for two handsome cups. *“Three rounds of ball cartridge were served to each man the distance 60 yards. The Sherborne Troop carbineers fired the first round without hitting the target.”*

The best bit almost certainly for those lucky enough to be invited were the various entertainments served up. The 1845 meeting had fine weather like the 1832 one and whilst the men were off shooting *“At three the Officers of the Yeomanry gave an elegant dejeuner at the Kings Arms to a large part of the ladies and gentlemen of the town and county...There was afterwards a grand dinner of the Officers at the Antelope Hotel”* This was clearly a boozy affair as numerous toasts were made the last being to the health of Colonel Frampton who *“acknowledged the toast with much spirit and effect. Other toasts were drunk and the proceedings which were very animated and passed off with much éclat..”* The dinner party broke up early however *“for the purposes of attending THE BALL, which took place at the Kings Arms Hotel and was kept up with unabated gaiety till four o’clock the next morning.”*

We cannot be sure if Martin attended these festivities, his name is not mentioned in the article but it is almost certain he was. He attended Permanent duty in 1832 [51], 1838 [58] -when it was held at Shaftesbury, 1845 when it was held in Dorchester and in 1852 [71] when it was held in Blandford. Serving in the Yeomanry was expensive but the volunteers did get paid, in June 1852 he received *“pay on permanent duty £2 6 4d”* but still ended up with a loss as he *“Pd Lodgings and Expenses on permanent duty £3 15 0d”* together with various expense looking after his horse:*“Paid Hay and straw {Mr Cains when on Permanent duty }5s”*. Martin was responsible for organising the Yeomanry as on 16th August 1845 we find him *“Entering Yeomanry Pay Lists in orderly Book and looking over Bills &c”*

In 1852 he recorded a tragedy when, on May 11th, a meeting of the yeomanry was held at Melbury Park *“Yeomanry meeting Melbury Park 11 o’k A boy killed by Mr G Templemans Mare running away under the traces the Boy was left in care of the Mare whilst Shooting for a Cup.”*

The Dorset County Chronicle takes up the story *“The corps went through the various exercises and evolutions under the direction of Captain Digby...At the conclusion of the exercise the men dismounted and a silver cup and sugar basin were shot for.....The pleasures of the day were somewhat dampened [sic] by an accident which caused the death of a poor lad named Job Lake aged about 16 years the son of a labouring man in the village. It appears that when the men dismounted previous to the shooting the deceased among others took charge of one of the horses which he mounted, contrary to warnings previously given him and with other lads started for a trot when the deceased took the lead in a gallop and whilst so engaged his head came into contact*

with a branch of a tree which hung low and he was thrown from the horse and expired in a few minutes.”

No doubt the day was somewhat dampened but the DCC attempted to cheer its readers with a graphic description of the wounds *“The deceased's head was terribly shattered the right side of the forehead and temple being completely beaten in exposing the brain.”* The following week on the 18th he was *“Preparing for Permanent duty”* and on the 19th *“Permanent Duty Regiment entered the town about ½ past Five”*. A part of the pleasure of the Yeomanry was clearly the social life as on the Friday night he *“Dined at J J Farquhasons Esq with 13 more of the Regiment there and Seven of our Troop”*.

The 1852 diary is the last one to record that he attended the annual “permanent duty”, he mentions the Yeomanry on 10th May 1854 *“The Yeomanry assembled in the Park Attending work people &c [sent 21 Sheep to Coker]”* but makes no other mention of it and went back to his farming work. It may come as a surprise that in 1852, when he was 71 he was still a part of the yeomanry but a clue may be provided by an article in the Dorset County Chronicle from 1843: *“On Tuesday last the first troop of the Queens Own Regiment of Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry were sumptuously entertained by their noble Captain Lord Stavordale at Melbury House, and a more agreeable day has not been passed for many years.”* After the usual round of reviews, inspections and shooting competitions *“At 3 o'clock, the excellent band of the Regiment struck up the welcome tune ,”The Roast Beef of Old England and the troop assembled in the splendid saloon at Melbury House, where a very sumptuous and substantial dinner was provided for them, consisting of every delicacy which the season afforded. The noble Captain Lord Stavordale, occupied the chair supported on his right by Col. Frampton and **Quarter-Master Martin** [my emphasis] and on his left by his noble father Lieut Colonel the Earl of Ilchester....”*

Now I have no proof but I cannot help thinking that Quarter Master Martin was John Martin. *“The Earl of Ilchester rose amidst deafening cheers...His Lordship took that opportunity of presenting to their valued and efficient Quarter-Master Martin a splendid Silver Cup which had been subscribed for by his Lordship and the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates of the First Troop and of which in their name he begged his acceptance “as [to use the words inscribed thereon] a token of their esteem and an acknowledgement of the services rendered for the last 13 years”*.

Quarter-Master Martin then rose, but his feelings of gratitude for so distinguished a mark of respect from his Brother soldiers evidently overpowered him, and it was some moments before he could recover sufficiently to give utterance to words. At length, however he made some excellent and pithy remarks, and said he trusted he should hand down that handsome token of their esteem as an heir loom in his family, and he hoped none of his children, or children's children, would ever disgrace it.”

There may be no proof that this refers to John but there is strong circumstantial evidence, we know he was in the Yeomanry, we know he conducted Yeomanry business on behalf of the Earl of Ilchester, we know that 13 years previously he had a meeting with the then quartermasters and that subsequently he compiled muster rolls, arranged for the billeting of troops all of which I think point to him being the quarter master concerned.

Public Duty

Since at least the 14th century representative of the manor and the church had met in the church vestry to discuss parish matters and to set a church rate. For centuries they worked alongside the Manorial courts but from the 16th century onwards the manorial system fell into decline. It was but a short step for the vestry to assume the responsibilities of the manor in managing the parochial officers. *“It was natural enough that the vestry should develop and extend its ancient rights of making by-laws, binding the parishioners generally upon every conceivable subject. These range[d] from fining persons bringing paupers into the parish or turning scabbed beasts upon the common or refusing to accept public office, to administering such common property as the pound, the common and the wastes of the parish.”*³² The principal officers were the churchwardens, constables, waywardens and overseers of the poor, appointed each year at Easter. The churchwarden oversaw the maintenance of the church, the waywarden the maintenance of the roads and the Overseers took care of the poor. Their roles were essentially managerial, with the exception of the constable who was more “hands on”; they were not expected themselves to repair the roads or the church clock etc but they were expected to ensure that such works were completed and within a budget that was set each year. They had to recommend a local rate to the vestry to ensure an adequate budget for each of their activities [which had also to be approved by the local justices] and at the end of the year submitted accounts which also had to be approved. If they had spent unwisely it was in the power of the Vestry [and justices] to refuse to approve the expenditure in which case they would be liable to pay for the work themselves.

Of course not just anybody could serve, eligibility for the principle offices of “government” was based on property and it was inevitable that Martin would have been called to serve the Parish. In the wider community we have already seen that he served as a juror at the assize in Dorchester and at the court in Evershot but he also fulfilled two other public roles. The first was as Overseer to the Poor, a post he held in 1821 jointly with John Chubb, but which is not mentioned in the diaries. The records of this time are to be found on Ancestry where the minutes of the Vestry and Overseers are combined. The Overseers records start in 1820 and he appears in the records as one of those rated to the poor law paying 2 ½d for *“House late Maber’s Op^c Rowland’s Courtlands”*. The Evershot records begin with a printed reminder of their duties entitled *“Extracts from Various Acts of Parliament, Shewing the Duty of the Overseers of the Poor”*. These included *“SETTING TO WORK the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children: Also for SETTING TO WORK all persons having no means to maintain themselves...”* *“THE PUNISHMENT OF POOR PERSONS REFUSING TO WORK”* included for *“All persons who not having wherewith to maintain themselves, live idle, without employment AND REFUSE TO WORK FOR THE USUAL AND COMMON WAGES GIVEN TO OTHER LABOURERS IN THE LIKE WORK..may be committed to the House of Correction to hard labour for any term not exceeding one month.”* Moreover if the person neglected his work or *“spending his money idly shall not apply a proper proportion of the money earned by him to the maintenance of his wife and family”* he got a months hard labour too.

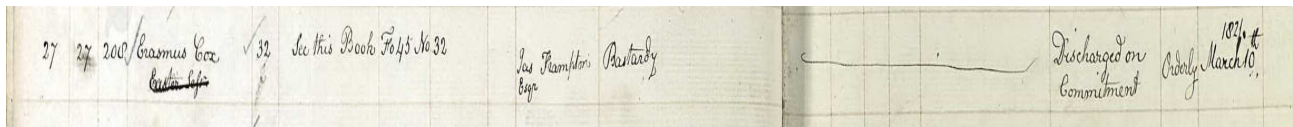
The responsibility of the Overseers was not inconsiderable either. They had to meet monthly, keep suitable accounts and if they were absent or negligent in their office were fined £1 for each absence. They too had to be liable to imprisonment if they failed to give up any money or goods given to them as Poor rates, had to pay a fine of £5 if they breached any of the terms of the various acts, and annually had to submit their accounts to two Justices of the Peace. If the Justices disapproved the way the money had been spent the Overseer was fined or imprisoned.

Martin served his year seemingly without problems and did not serve again. The last record from the Overseers is 1835; the following year the Poor Law Amendment act was passed replacing outdoor relief with indoor relief – the workhouse. Nevertheless there are a few interesting payments made by him during his year in office which reflect the society of the time. The year started in March when 17s 6d was spent on expenses appointing the new Overseers and verifying the accounts. In April £5 18s 9d was paid to Samuel Groves who re-thatched the poor house and later in the month 3d to “*a poor man travelling in distress*”. J Pulman blacksmith received 8s 8d for repairs to the Poor House and then later in the month £1 19s 9d was paid to “*Dr Hodges attendg [sic] Jas Groves at Maiden Newton*” and then “*Inoculating his 5 children with the small pox -15s*”.

It is commonly known that Edward Jenner introduced smallpox vaccination in 1796 but what is less commonly known is that experiments with vaccination had taken place much closer to Martin's home in 1774. The village of Yetminster had an epidemic of the disease in that year and a local farmer, Benjamin Jesty, inoculated his wife and two sons with cowpox from one of his own cows. Apparently this caused considerable hostility locally but when another outbreak occurred a few years later none of them caught the disease. This story would almost certainly have been known to John Martin because one of Benjamin's sons, another Benjamin appears at various points in the diaries. Although Jenner won a £10000 prize for his work with vaccination it is now acknowledged that Jesty [and some others] had done pioneering work many years before him.

In 1575 during the reign of the Virgin Queen the “Bastardy Act” gave powers to the Churchwardens or Overseers of the Poor to examine a woman, pregnant outside of marriage, in order to establish the name of the father. In the absence of a man to support the woman it was assumed that the mother and child would become chargeable to the parish poor rate. The Overseers had the power to force the father to agree to support the child [or risk imprisonment] and even on occasions to make him marry the mother. In April 1821 Martin paid 2s “*Fees examining Elizabeth Frampton in bastardy [xxxxxx]*” and in August an entry in his own diary reads “*Pd for warrant Frampton Bastardy 3s*”. There are numerous Framptons in Dorset at this time and it has not been possible to identify which she is, what her child was called or who the father was. As you might expect the story does not have a happy ending: Dec 3rd “*Shroud Eliz Framptons child 2s....Mr Conway coffin for do[ditto] 7s*”

After the April entry about Elizabeth Frampton we see the consequences of bastardy from another angle: “*Erasmus Cox [Jnrs] wife and family a fortnight since his commitment in bastardy 14s*”



Cox had spent a month in Dorchester gaol, presumably because he would not support his wife although bearing in mind the subsequent entries it may have been more likely he could not support the family. Even though he was discharged in March the family still called on the parish and a further £1 7s 6d was paid later in April and 14s in June. In September Erasmus Cox himself becomes chargeable to the parish receiving 7s and then 6s “*in distress*” and payments continue into January 1822 each month him getting 8s for four weeks in distress. Some of the entries are rather poignant such as “*Widow White a pair of shoes for her son Samuel 2s*”; and “*Edward Chubb Sen Seventy incapable of labour 7s 6d*” followed a month later by “*Edward Chubb 3 weeks allowance to his death 7s 6d, also to his son in law Jos graves his funeral expenses £1 7s 10d*” Many of the entries are repetitive with the same people appearing month after month and several entries about men and women travelling “*in distress*” suggesting a large problem with itinerant poor. At the beginning of the year the Poor rate had raised £496 12s 10 ½ d and at the end they had spent in total £425 1s 2 ½ d leaving £71 11s 8d in hand.

On the 16th December 1827 Martin was “*Working this day made two sketches for Lord Oglander and Mr xxxx charge 2 guineas*” and on the 23rd “*At home all day working on the Beaminster turnpike*”. In the extant diaries these are the only two Sundays where he is actively working. There are no expressions of overt religious feeling in the diaries themselves although there are a few entries relating to religious practice. In addition to supporting the church choir he was also a keen supporter of the local Sunday school donating £1 each year and, although it is only mentioned once in the diaries, 1852 “*Pd Mr Eaton my Usual Subscription to missionary society 5s*”. As is well known the Victorians had a penchant for rebuilding their churches and in 1854 he “*Gave subscription to Shepton [Montague] Church £5*” and on May 22nd “*Went down to Edwins at the Opening of Shepton Church - - -*” and the next day “*At Shepton when the Newly repaired Church was opened [our Singers attended].*” Most of his religious activity however was undertaken in Evershot.

From the records on Ancestry we can say that at Easter 1828 [47] he became Churchwarden at St Osmunds, a post he was to hold until 1863. Until 1852 he held the post together with William Jennings then, Joseph Crew Jennings for a year until the latter's death and then finally from 1854 to Easter 1864³³ with his son Arthur. However a newspaper cutting from 1858 reads “*The Easter Vestry for this parish [Evershot] was held last Thursday. A Church rate of 3d in the pound was granted; and Mr F Martin and Mr A Martin were re-elected churchwardens. This is the thirty third year the former gentleman has filled the office.*” Aside from getting the initial of his name wrong this would have implied he was a church warden from 1825 for which there is no evidence. However what is perhaps more interesting is the rest of the article which continues “*On the recommendation of J J Clapcott, Esq the medical officer of the district it was determined to provide a bath for the use of the poorer inhabitants, in cases of necessity, and nearly sufficient was*

33 John died in 1863 but he was not replaced in the year and the records stand in his name until 1864.

subscribed in the vestry for this useful adjunct to medical treatment.” I can find no record of one being provided.

The Churchwardens records are concerned purely with church matters and a selection of entries is given below. Much has been omitted either because they have little detail or because they are so frequent as to become tedious. The church had major problems with its windows for example and its clock. For year after year there are payments to Mr Rendall the glazier ,to the blacksmith, to the bell rope suppliers and to endless contractors to repair the clock.

1828	<i>Pd Mr Coswells expenses at Visitation</i>	<i>10s 6d</i>
	<i>Pd Mr Bows Bill Plumber and Glazier</i>	<i>£4 7s 7 ½ d</i>
	<i>Pd Mr Guppy for Matting of Butts</i>	<i>£1 2s 6d</i>
	<i>Pd Mr Chubb for sacramental wine</i>	<i>£1 18s 6d</i>
	<i>Pd getting Iron Moles out of Surplice [sic]</i>	<i>1s</i>
	<i>Pd for candles for church</i>	<i>£1 10s 3 ½d</i>
	<i>Mr Bows another glaziers bill</i>	<i>4s</i>

The 1828 entry mentions the Visitation and this is an annual recurring expense and one which Martin probably attended in the majority of the years that he was Churchwarden. The first record that we have is for 1832 when he “*Pd at Visitation for Parish 15s*” followed in 1838 by “*Visitation at Cerne*”, 1852 “*Visit to Sherborne visitation*”, in 1854 “*Visitation at Sherborne 10 o'clock Went to Sherborne with Arthur in his Carriage*”. In 1861 there is a curious juxtaposition of what might be thought Christian and unchristian events. On the 27th July he “*Went to Dorchester respng turning out Sol Rendell & John Rendell of their Cottages*”. On the 19th August he wrote, “*The Two Rendells to turn out Went to Sherborne Visitation Mr Collins with me Cut my Peas*”. This latter must have been an action packed day. Mr Collins was the Rector.

It might be wondered what the visitation was and was for. Practice varied but visitations took place annually and were conducted by the archdeacon of the diocese with the bishop undertaking it every third year or so. Originally they were occasions when the churchwardens were sworn in and asked about the moral state of the parish – and the clergy. As the centuries passed however they became much more detailed. I do not know what was asked at the 19th century Salisbury visitation but the Wiltshire Record Society examined the return for 1783. There were 20 questions which were highly detailed ranging from the relatively innocuous: “*How often and at what hours upon the Lord’s day is divine service, both prayers and preaching, performed in your church or chapel?*” to the more sinister: “*Are there any reputed papists in your parish, or chapelry, and how many and of what rank? [b] Have any persons been lately perverted to popery, and by whom and by what means? [c] Is there any place in your parish, or chapelry, in which they assemble for divine worship, and where is it?*”

1830	<i>Pd Ringing Funeral Bell for King Geo 4th</i>	<i>5s</i>
	<i>Pd for a Public Prayer</i>	<i>1s</i>

Nothing about the Church was free as we can see when George 4th died.

In October 1831 Cholera broke out in the North East around Sunderland and throughout 1832 spread across the country. The Dorset County Chronicle posted regular updates on where it had reached and in August it arrived in Exeter and later in the month at Bridport. It was [and is] a highly infectious disease with a high fatality rate and it is common to see many parishes and towns offering prayers for protection at this time.

1831	<i>James Roberts Bill Lock P[arish]Chest Pd Thomas Cox -Cryer</i>	<i>5s 4d 1s</i>
1832	<i>Two prayers Thos Cox crying the breaking of Church window Thos Cox a years Clerkship Draw^g up clock etc Prayer for Cholera</i>	<i>2s 1s £5 15 s 0d 1s</i>

Sometimes the entries are enigmatic for example the 1832 entry for “*Thos Cox crying the breaking of Church window*”. It is difficult to interpret its meaning but the transcription is clear enough.

1848	<i>Pd Joseph Groves for Reeping Church</i>	<i>1s 5 ¾ d</i>
1849	<i>Joseph Groves for keeping church fence</i>	<i>3s 6 ¾ d</i>

Some entries refer to people who had an unfortunate end. Groves did occasional work for the church [and was frequently in arrears for his church rate] but in 1859 he came to a sticky end as reported in the Dorset County Herald: “*Death from Choking – On Monday, December 27 a man named Joseph Groves, a thatcher, of this place was partaking of his dinner, he was accidentally choked by attempting to swallow a piece of beef. The poor man, after lingering a few minutes in the greatest agony, expired. Deceased was at the time rather the worse for liquor.*”

There are few entries in the 1840’s of any interest but in August 1852 St Osmunds underwent a typical Victorian “reconstruction” as the Sherborne Mercury reported: “*The new structure which is to be in the style of the fifteenth century, and in accordance with that of the old church includes a nave and north and south aisles.*” The idea for this came from Joseph Crew Jennings and he and Martin are named in the Faculty from the Bishop of Salisbury having overall responsibility for seeing the works were completed. The cost was to be about £1500 [60 labourers wages] but “*it is much to be regretted that the chancel, which is in a miserable state forms no part of the contemplated works: if allowed to remain as at present it will be detrimental to the general effect of the new church. The committee unfortunately have no control over this portion.*”

The justification for the compulsory tithe in ancient times had been that it was divine law and the practice had been in the tradition of the Levites, the ancient Jewish tribe who had provided the priests and servants of the temple and who maintained it. In this tradition the tithe had been divided into three – a part for the maintenance of the priests, a part for the maintenance of the church and the final part for alms for the poor. The Church early on had divested itself of its responsibility for the maintenance of the church, other than the chancel which was supposed to be paid for by income from tithe and glebe land. Even today people who

have been unfortunate enough to have bought a house on glebe land can still be called on to repair the chancel of a church [it doesn't even have to be local] unless they have a solicitor wise to the problem!

In the event the Rector of St Osmunds at the time, Henry Hoskins, gave permission for the chancel to be rebuilt but only on such conditions the committee appointed to oversee the work could not agree to. One suspects he wanted them to pay for it. In the event the Earl of Ilchester added to Joseph Crews donation by giving £400 as did William Jennings with the balance being made up of other donations. This was not enough however as the project came in over budget - about £2000- with the final amount raised being £1720. Doubtless odd benefactions eventually filled the gap. From the minutes of the Church wardens it appears that services in the mean time were conducted in a barn. The restoration cost them a lot of money, before the restoration the Churchwardens expenses rarely went above £16 and the rate 3d in the pound but during and afterwards we see an increase in bills to £40-50 with the rate at 6d [although it did fall again to 3d in 1856]. On the other hand whilst they were in the barn the expenditure was about £10.

The Church was reopened in June 1853 an event covered in a two column article by the Sherborne Mercury but Johns names does not crop up once. There is however a handsome tribute to the choir and to Arthur: *"It would be an act of injustice to the choir and their instructor and to Mr A Martin, a gentleman residing in the village, who accompanied them on the Hamonium, were we to omit to mention the effective manner in which the choral portions of the service were rendered, evincing as they did an amount of musical skill not often to be met with in country towns and far more seldom in country villages."* Echoes perhaps of Hardy's Mellstock choir.

The restoration was not perhaps entirely successful as the number of entries and expenses rocketed.

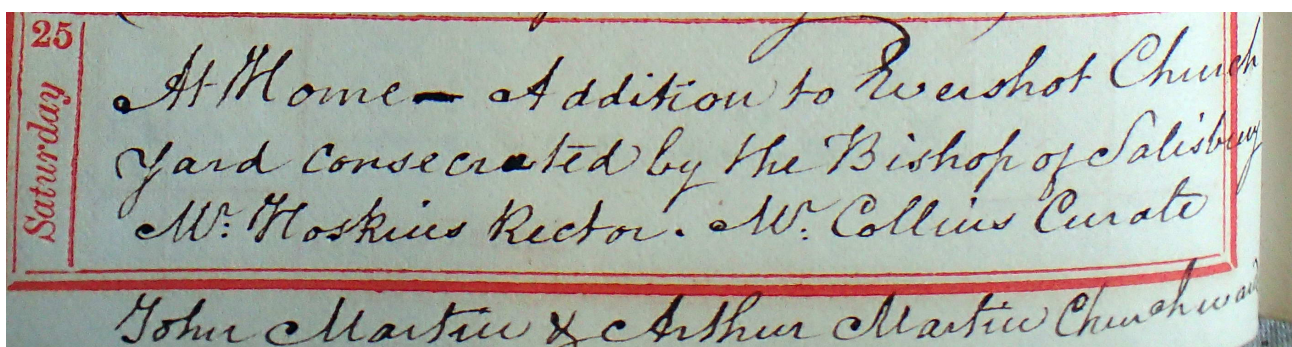
1852	<i>Custard Yeovil for binding and repairs Church Bible</i>	<i>5s 6d</i>
1853	<i>Esau Knell covering stuffing and repairing communion cushions</i>	<i>£1 13s 0d</i>
	<i>Mr Beale for repairing Harmonium and expenses from Weymouth</i>	<i>£2 14s 0d</i>
1854	<i>Robert Pulman for taking down Church fittings in Barn</i>	<i>£3 13s 3d</i>
	<i>I Woodford for repairing Church Harmonium</i>	<i>£2 0s 0d</i>
	<i>Repairs to Bells</i>	<i>£4 15s 9d</i>
	<i>George Mullins putting Zinc to clock cars</i>	<i>7s 3d</i>
	<i>Henry Cox repairs to bells</i>	<i>£5 9s 10d</i>
	<i>Repairing and readjusting Church Clock Hancock and Co</i>	<i>£10 10s 0d</i>
	<i>Harmen and Gillett Charcoal stove and Charcoal for same</i>	<i>16s 6d</i>
	<i>Henry Conway for repairing Bells</i>	<i>£5 9s 10d</i>
	<i>Poleman [??] for Keeping Wet out of Charcoal</i>	<i>£2 7s 0d</i>
1856	<i>John Perry advertising reopening Evershot Church</i>	<i>7s</i>
	<i>Licence for preaching in Barn</i>	<i>10s 6d</i>
	<i>John Groves for pointing spire of church and cutting stone for windows &c</i>	<i>£8 9s 6d</i>

	<i>James Roberts for repairs to Bells, lead for vestry roof oiling clock &c</i>	18s
1857	<i>Hancock and Cox repairs to clock H Conway repairs to clock G W Beale for attendance at the opening of church as organist [before omitted]</i>	£4 4s 0d 1s £2 2s 0d

At some stage around about 1858 a decision to enlarge the churchyard was made. This too was to prove an expensive option.

1858	<i>George Allen and others for stone drawing at Melbury quarry for the wall around new churchyd Pd for New Oxford edition of the Bible do New Cambridge Prayer Book do Book for the Communion Table do Book of Offices</i>	£3 6s 0d £2 15s £2 12s 8d £1 4s 6d 6s 6d
1859	<i>Thos Roskelly for hauling Stone for Church Yard Wall J Seymour for mending tools used in stone quarrying for church wall J Samways for hauling stone from Hold Quarry to Evershot Church Yard wall John Groves mason on account for building Church yard Wall</i>	£9 15s £1 12s 11d £5 2s 0d £12 0s 0d
1860	<i>John Groves on further account of building church wall John Groves balance of his bills for building church yard wall</i>	£8 0s 0d £17 2s 2d

Eventually on 25th May 1861 the Churchyard was opened and it is here that we have an entry at last in the diaries.



The event was recorded by the DCC and was consecrated by the Bishop of Salisbury Walter Kerr Hamilton and the service was attended by various other dignitaries "and by the Churchwardens and some of the inhabitants. The Rector then on behalf of the parish presented a petition that his

Lordship would be please to consecrate the additional churchyard, to which he graciously assented and Mr A Martin, one of the churchwardens, delivered the conveyance of the ground which the Bishop delivered to the Registrar.”

John Martin, ever the bridesmaid was not mentioned again. The expenses continued however.

1861	<i>John Groves on Further act of building Church Wall</i>	<i>£8 0s 0d</i>
	<i>John Groves balance of his bills for building Church Yard wall</i>	<i>£17 2s 0d</i>
	<i>J Samways for carting earth at Evershot Church Yard</i>	<i>£2 8s 0d</i>
	<i>Messr White Barrett and White Legal Expenses as to the new burial ground</i>	<i>£10 3 s 6d</i>
	<i>J Thompkins Sydenham & Hoskins Labourers for work done in new burial ground</i>	<i>£11 16s 9d</i>
	<i>J Groves for cleaning snow from Church</i>	<i>10s 6d</i>

In 1863 Martin died and for the years 1862 and 3 the hand that had completed so many entries fell still as Arthur assumed the reins. In the last year he was churchwarden the final bills came in.

1862	<i>Pd Messrs Macdonald & Brodericks Bill for consecration of New Burial Ground</i>	<i>£17 5s 6d</i>
	<i>Mr Baskett for Conveyance of same to the Parish Officers</i>	<i>£8 6s 10d</i>

He himself was buried in the old church yard.

End of Section 1